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From State Prison to State President

Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa.

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'I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it.'
– Voltaire.

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FREE AT LAST

Watching the momentous events that unfolded in South Africa at the end of last month and the beginning of this, was a deeply moving and extraordinarily delightful experience to anyone committed to democracy and human decency.

Never in human history have so many people been subjected so long to so much oppression and deprivation in the land of their own birth by an evil system that came to be known as apartheid. After all those years of the bitterness, the killings, the violence, the lives lost and wasted in prison and poverty, the world witnessed the final denouement and exorcising of apartheid from the body politic of South Africa. The world watched in amazement and with joy the peaceful transformation of the country from an oppressive system to a multi-party, multi-racial, pluralist and democratic system.

It goes without saying that Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress played a glorious and unforgettable role in these developments. The ANC was not and is not a political party in the sense it is generally understood. It is more or less a coalition of several organisations committed to certain identifiable fundamental aims. In that position, the ANC was able to mobilise a vast spectrum of opinion within its fold. It is the broad and representative character of the ANC which enabled it to obtain the recognition it did.

A person who was put in prison in solitary confinement for over quarter of a century, if he was a normal human being, would have been expected to be full of feelings of hatred and revenge against those who were responsible for putting him in prison. But Mandela, from the day he stepped out of prison four years ago, conducted himself as no ordinary human being. He was the embodiment of confidence, courage, tolerance, humility, and compassion. He brought to bear a rare sense of fairplay and justice and an inexhaustible capacity to make compromises through the years of negotiations with President F.W. de Klerk, his National Party Government and other political parties.

Even as the elections were fast approaching and the violence between Inkatha and the ANC was reaching a crescendo, with white extremists of the AWB wreaking havoc planting bombs everywhere, Nelson Mandela went out of his way to accommodate the Zulu King by agreeing to enact constitutional amendments enshrining the special place for the King. He thereby enabled the last obstacle for Inkatha to enter the electoral process. This he did because he was committed at all cost to ensure a free and fair election without violence and a peaceful transfer of power through the exercise of the democratic will of the people. This he achieved, and from state prison Mandela had traversed the peaceful path to become State President.

Mandela's commitment to pluralism and the guarantee of minority rights, including those of the white population, was much in evidence when he declared that he was so relieved that the ANC had not obtained the two-third majority needed to amend the Constitution; for if it had the minorities would have felt insecure. As a practical demonstration of this commitment, Mandela has appointed to the cabinet of the Government of National Unity many ministers from the minority parties.

And even in victory, Mandela was a man of the people. In his victory speech, he declared, 'South Africa's heroes are legend across the generations. But it is you, the people, who are our true heroes. This is one of the most important moments in the life of the country. I stand here before you filled with deep pride and joy; pride in the ordinary humble people of this country. You have shown such a calm, patient determination to reclaim this country as your own; and joy that we can loudly proclaim from the rooftops – Free At Last. I stand before you humbled by your courage, with a heart full of love for all of you.'

Today, Mandela stands erect like a colossus of stupendous proportions – a politician, a statesman and a leader of people being counted among the greatest that human history has produced.

NEWS REVIEW

★ ASSASSINATION OF SABALINGAM IN PARIS CONDEMNED

Sabaratnam Sabalingam, a Tamil of Sri Lankan origin who has been living with his family in Paris for the last several years, was shot at point-blank range and killed in the presence of his wife and child in their own home by two gunmen, known to be Tamils, on 1 May 1994. Sabalingam's assassination, believed to be politically motivated, has been widely condemned by many expatriate Tamil organisations and individuals.

No one has claimed responsibility for the killing, nor has anyone been apprehended by the French authorities. Some have rushed to attribute the killing to the Tamil Tigers, but their international spokesman, Mr. Lawrence Thilakar, himself residing in Paris, denied the allegations.

According to the victim's widow, Sabalingam's assassins had gained entry into his residence under false pretences – having telephoned him and seeking his assistance and an appointment to discuss some of their personal problems. The gunmen arrived at about 2.30 pm on 1 May 1994, rang the door bell, and the unsuspecting family members allowed them into the house. The two who arrived were Tamils and spoke Tamil. Within two minutes of their arrival, one of them pulled out a gun and shot at Sabalingam several times – one bullet pierced through his forehead killing him almost instantly. The two killers wrenched off the telephone wires, threatened the terror-stricken family members not to shout and escaped.

Born on 14 January 1952 in Velanani in the Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka, Sabalingam had been a pioneer of the Tamil liberation struggle. He spent some three years in Sri Lankan jails for his active participation in the 1970s in struggles against State repression of Tamils. He came to France in 1981 to avoid further persecution. He was a well known writer, publisher of Tamil literary works, human rights activist and a documentalist, besides working in an organisation assisting Tamil refugees with their problems.

A founder of the publishing institution, ASIA, Sabalingam was responsible for the publication, among others, of works of contemporary Tamil poets like V.I.S. Jeyapalan, Cheran, Arunthathy, Selvam and Cholaikili, the re-publicationo of 'The History of the Muslims of Puttalam', 'Puthiyathor Ulagam', 'Yalapana Vaipava Maalai', 'Eluding Peace' containing articles by Taraki in the Sunday Island, and 'Emergency 58' containing the story of the anti-Tamil riots of 1958 by Tarzie Vittacvhi. He has also been responsible for translation and distribution of the reports by the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna). At the time of his murder, Sabalingam is reported to have been, in collaboration with another Tamil writer, involved in a project of writing the history of the Tamil liberation struggle.

Condemning the assassination of Sabalingam, the London-based Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People (SCOT) in a statement adopted by its General Council said:

'While there have been many politically motivated acts of violence among Tamils in some western countries, Sabalingam's brutal assassination is the first one of its type – a well planned premeditated murder carried out in a western country. Acts of assassinations have occurred among Tamils in Sri Lanka and India over the years, but the killing of Sabalingam in the comparative safety of a western capital sets a new and dangerous trend, and represents a sinister development threatening the safety of all Tamils living in European countries who wish to exercise their basic right to free expression.

'We condemn the callous and senseless assassination of Sabalingam as an act of unmitigated lawlessness by any standards. If his murder was intended not only to physically eliminate him, but also to stifle dissent within the expatriate Tamil community, this trend is to be condemned as contrary to the larger interest and welfare of Tamils living abroad. The commission of such acts will only strengthen the resolve of European governments to pursue a policy of seeking to repatriate Tamil refugees and asylum seekers, and to refuse to admit new arrivals. We appeal to all those concerned in the name of humanity, human rights and the larger interest of the Tamil community to desist from indulging in similar acts of violence'.

Many foreign-based Tamil publications and human rights and solidarity organisations, including *Manitham* (Switzerland), *Samar* (France), *Sinthanai, Theni, Thoondil, Oothaa, South Asian Solidarity Committee* and *Inter-Culture Media Point* (Germany), *Suvadugal* and *Sumaigal* (Norway), *Thedal, Kaalam, Nangaavathu Parimanam, Thayagam, Vishippu, Kiriya Kural, Tamil Resource Centre, Sri Lankans for Human Rights* and *Campaign for Democracy in Sri Lanka* (Canada), *Thaaham* and *Eelapoomi* (UK) have condemned the assassination of Sabalingam.

Their statement said that the killing of Sabalingam in Europe is a 'cause for alarm and more significantly, destroys the credibility of the liberation struggle in the international forum. To place the personal growth and authority of any one militant movement over the liberation struggle poses a real threat to the sovereignty of the Tamil people. Such actions must be strongly condemned as well as rejected. Sabalingam, like Rajani Thiranagama, is yet another victim in the long line of Tamil intellectuals who have been killed for linking human rights and the liberation struggle. In both cases, the universal recognition these independent activists were accorded for their self-sacrifice and commitment to the cause, lent them credibility which posed a threat to their killers.

'It is imperative that we universally condemn such killings which are an attempt to suppress the voice of freedom and together, challenge the killers in order to prevent more senseless deaths. Those who believe that dissenting voices can be silenced with guns are indeed blind to history. The greatest eulogy we can deliver to Sabalingam is to continue to work for human rights and liberation'.

★ DAUGHTER SEEKS PROBE INTO FATHER'S MURDER

The members of late President Premadasa's family are aggrieved that the investigation into his assassination on 1 May last year have not been conducted properly and with the required expedition. Having complained to the newly appointed General Secretary of the governing UNP, Dr. Gamini Wijesekera, the daughter of the late President, Ms. Dulanjali Jayakody has despatched a letter to President Wijetunga calling for a Commission of Inquiry to probe the assassination.

In her letter Ms. Jayakody states that she had gathered from newspapers that most of the suspects arrested in connection with the assassination had been released without charge. She adds, 'One year has passed since the demise of my father who was much loved and admired by the people of Sri Lanka for the great services rendered. I regret to observe that lack of interest and seriousness shown by the authorities concerned to carry out proper investigations into his assassination.

'From what I have been able to gather, the investigations have been carried out in a haphazard manner unworthy of a leader whose loss to the

country is now greatly felt by the people.

'As your Excellency who was chosen by my father to be the Prime Minister would know my late beloved father as President took great pains instituting thorough investigations whenever there has been allegations of impropriety with regard to the death of leading personalities, either appointing commissions of inquiry or getting foreign experts to investigate.

'It saddens me to realise as his daughter that the same respect and concern had not been shown with regard to the death of President Premadasa.'

★ TULF CAMPAIGN

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), which has been operating from Colombo up to now, has begun a campaign of reorganisation of the party. As a first step the leaders of the Front, including its President Mr. M. Sivasithamparam and its General Secretary R. Sampanthan, visited Trincomalee in the east of Sri Lanka with a view to reactivating the party branch there and win support among the people.

The Front was badly shaken by the assassination in Colombo of its leaders in July 1989, and its remaining leaders had not thereafter visited the Tamil areas since for security reasons.

During their three day stay in Trincomalee, they met several people, visited refugee camps and held a largely attended seminar on the 'Ethnic Conflict and the TULF Stand' which was chaired by Mr. Sivasithamparam. A former Member of Parliament, Mr. A. Thankathurai traced the history of the ethnic conflict from the time of the Donoughmore Commission to 1977. He also dealt with the long and hard struggle by the Tamil leaders, past and present to defend the rights of the Tamil speaking people since 1948. He said that the problem was created by the Sinhala leaders who failed to keep their promises, and had they accepted the federal solution suggested by the Federal Party under the late Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, the country's problems could have been averted and the destruction and deaths of tens of thousands could have been avoided.

The former MP for Trincomalee, Mr. R. Sampathan spoke at length about the role that the TULF and its leaders had played in obtaining Indian support for the Tamil cause, and in bringing about the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987.

Dr. Neelan Thiruchelvam said unlike the Tamils living in Malaysia dispersed all over the country, the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka occupied a definite territory. Tamils living in Malaysia could be described as a minority community, but they occupy a certain definable area as in Sri Lanka, they must be regarded as a nation, although they might be in a minority in numerical terms. Though a minority people would be satisfied by being treated with equality, a minority nation should enjoy a share of political power. Such sharing of political power could be achieved through a federal system granting the powers of administration in the region.

Mr. Sivasithamparam spoke at length and said that the Front was prepared to join other Tamil and Muslim parties to solve the ethnic problem and win the rights for the Tamil speaking people. He said that the Muslims constituted a component of the Tamil speaking people and the wrong done to them must be rectified as soon as possible. The others who spoke included Members of Parliament Mr. Mawai Senathirajah and Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham.

As a next step in its reactivation campaign, the TULF hopes to visit Vavuniya.

★ THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAY

The Western Province Chief Minister, Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranatunga, told a symposium held in Colombo organised by the Law and Society Trust that Sri Lanka could learn a lesson from examples set by Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk in finding a solution to the island's ethnic conflict.

Mrs. Kumaranatunka said that Mandela and de Klerk demonstrated in such a short period with the political will and commitment that a peaceful solution could be found even to a problem based on three-centuries of racial bigotry. Developments in South Africa were one of the moving experiences of what human effort with commitment could do to overcome a hopeless situation of conflict.

Paying a glowing tribute to the 75-year-old ANC leader's handling of the negotiating process, and describing the last minute compromises conceded by the ANC as path-breaking, Chandrika said, 'The ANC could have said that South Africa was their land, and blacks were the majority. But the ANC did not do so, and emphasised the equality and brotherhood of blacks and whites.

'Political leaders, religious personalities and other decision makers should rise above petty differences and think in terms of national harmony and national unity with respect for each other's equal right to live with dignity'.

★ RADHIKA TO REPORT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Chairman of the U.N. Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) Ambassador Peter P. Van Wulfften Palthe, has appointed Radhika Coomaraswamy as the Special Rapporteur on 'Violence Against Women' for a period of three years. The appointment was in pursuance of a Resolution adopted without vote at the Fiftieth Session of the U.N. Human Rights Commission concluded recently in Geneva on the elimination of violence against women.

This Resolution followed the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference which called for the elimination of gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation. The appointment of a Special Rapporteur has been widely regarded as a milestone in the 'struggle' for the universal application of human rights to all women'.

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur requires her to report on an annual basis to the U.N. Human Rights Commission on violence against women including its causes and consequences. She will be required to seek and receive information from governments, inter-governmental bodies and women's organisations on violence against women, and to respond effectively to such information. She will also be required to undertake missions either separately or with other special rapporteur and working groups. She will be required to recommend measures at the international, regional and national level to eliminate violence against women, its causes and to remedy its consequences.

The Secretary General has been requested to provide the Special Rapporteur with the staff and resources required to perform all her mandated functions, and to further ensure that her reports are brought to the attention of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Radhika Coomaraswamy is the Director of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies based in Sri Lanka. She was educated at Yale College, Columbia Law School and Harvard Law School. She is a lawyer and social scientist of international standing and has had many years of experience in addressing the human rights of women. She is the author of numerous articles and reports on gender equal-

Continued on page 6

Epic Venture

Hindi Serial Based on *Silappadikaram and Manimekalai*

Its main aim is to recapture the audience for Doordarshan. But more than that *Upasana*, a 22-episode Hindi serial scheduled for telecast from mid-March, hopes to familiarise viewers across the country with *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*, the Tamil epics which have been translated into all the major languages of the world.

Originally conceived by Dr. Ma Po Sivagnanam, an expert on ancient Tamil classics, the serial was okayed by DD after Krishnaswamy entered the scene. 'Getting the project commissioned by Doordarshan had some advantages. The main one was that I had a budget and was given an advance,' says he.

However, Doordarshan's budget was hardly sufficient for such a grand venture. 'But I took it as a challenge,' says Krishnaswamy. He says that the result has been gratifying. 'We could save a lot on cost because we have most of the infrastructure necessary for the production of a mega serial, such as the Betacam facility, a large studio and digital effects.'

Krishnaswamy himself has written the screenplay, which integrates *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*. 'I have always been fascinated by *Silappadikaram*. But there were some questions raised in it which are answered in *Manimekalai*. So I felt the need to treat them as a whole.' he says.

Silappadikaram is the story of Kannaki and Kovalan, whose perfect marriage turns sour with the entrance of Madhavi, a courtesan. Kovalan has a relationship with Madhavi, and the couple beget a child, Manimekalai. Later, Kovalan realises his folly and reunites with Kannaki. But the reunion is short-lived because Kovalan is made the fall guy in a theft, and the king of Madurai orders his execution. Kannaki gets so angry at the injustice that it sets the whole of Madurai on fire. The story then shifts to Manimekalai; and the latter episodes show the renunciation of the world by Madhavi and Manimekalai.

Krishnaswamy has taken pains to recreate the second century atmosphere. *Upasana* was shot at locations near Mysore, Bangalore and Mamallapuram, near Madras. The highlight of the serial is the special effects, which was created by Krishnaswamy himself. 'I spent more than 18 hours a day perfecting the effects. It did not cost me much because it was done in my studio,' says he. Shooting commenced in 1991, and Krishnaswamy delivered the 22 episodes to DD in January.

Veteran writer Valampuri Somanathan has penned the dialogue with some help from Dr. Sivagnanam. It was translated into Hindi by Radha Janardhan. Krishnaswamy points out that music is another high pont of *Upasana*. 'It is difficult to recreate the music of the second century because most of it is based on the Vedas. But Shyam Joseph has used classical music to good effect,' says he. The serial's 18 songs have been penned by Maya Govind, who wrote the bawdy *gutur gutur* number for the Hindi film *Dalaal*, and have been sung by playback singers S.P. Balasubramaniam and Chitra.

'I threw the net wide for artistes to play the roles of Kovalan and Madhavi. But for Kannaki and Manimekalai I decided to look only at artistes from south India,' says Krishnaswamy. Veerendra Singh, the hero of the National Film Development Corporation film *Tulsidas*, plays Kovalan and Navnit Parihar, model and TV actress, dons the role of Madhavi. Moon Moon Sen, the failed sex bomb of Hindi films, appears briefly as a Gandharva princes, all prim and propah.

For the other female leads, Krishnaswamy did not have to look further than his own household. His younger daughter Gita plays Kannaki and his elder daughter Lata essays Manimekalai.

Krishnaswamy, who has been in showbusiness for the last 30 years and had produced Indus Valley to Indira Gandhi in the seventies, says that the latter part of the serial has 'more elements of the fairy tale and the fable'. One can feel the change in wavelength from *Silappadikaram* to *Manimekalai*. I have tried to maintain a balance between their diversity.' The artistes, he says, did not have much difficulty with Hindi. 'Veerendra Singh and Navnit had no problem because they speak the language. The other artistes too are familiar with Hindi. In cases where Hindi could not be spoken without an accent, we dubbed.'

Upasana is the first serial to be based on a regional classic and meant for a national audience. Says Krishnaswamy: 'Our aim is to bring before the people of the country the tale of three great Tamil women – Kannaki, Manimekalai and Madhavi'.

– Shaukat H. Mohammed.
(Courtesy of *The Week*, Feb. 27, 1994).

Continued from page 5

ity, gender-based violence, women and religion, and international human rights issues.

She is the author of *Sri Lanka, The Crisis of the Anglo-American Legal Tradition in a Developing Country* (1983) and has co-edited *The Ethical Dilemmas of Development in Asia* (1980). *The Judiciary in Plural Societies* (1986) and *An Introduction to Social Science* (1994).

She was a member of the Presidential Commission on Youth and Member of the Sri Lanka National Commission on Women. She is also a Joint-Secretary of the Nadesan Centre on Human Rights, and a member of the Civil Rights Movement. She is also a steering Committee member of the Asia Pacific Forum for Women Law and Development.

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PEOPLE and POLITICS

Haunted By Underworld Links, UNP in Disarray

This year's May Day witnessed one of the biggest processions and mass rallies held in recent years by the opposition parties led by the Peoples Alliance. That it should be so in the wake of the Alliance's unexpected impressive victory in the recently held Southern Provincial elections is not surprising.

But what is surprising is the speed with which the once powerful ruling United National Party (UNP) appears to be crumbling at all levels. The UNP under former Presidents Jayawardene and Premadasa used to put up the most colourful and best attended extravagant displays of carnival proportions on May Days. Thrown into utter disarray following the electoral debacle in the southern province, there was no UNP May Day rally. The leadership's excuse was that they were participating in a number of commemoration religious ceremonies in memory of late President Premadasa.

The UNP could not even take political credit for the unveiling of Premadasa's statue in Colombo because of the confusion and controversy surrounding the ceremony. President Wijetunga who was expected to unveil his predecessor's statue did not even attend the function. It was said that he kept away for 'security reasons'! But it was attended by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe and Housing Construction Minister and Premadasa's closest political ally Sirisena Cooray. The statue was unveiled by former President Mr. J.R. Jayawardene.

Of most significance was that the unveiling ceremony was boycotted by the family members and the widow of the late President. In fact Premadasa's son described the statue as a caricature of his late father and that it was an insult to him. Mrs. Hema Premadasa, who of late has been said to be making a bid for a major political role within the UNP, had organised a separate commemorative religious ceremony in memory of her late husband. Though many political personalities were invited to the ceremony, President Wijetunga and other known anti-Premadasa stalwarts of the UNP were not invited.

The UNP today appears to be going through a deep crisis affected by a lack of political direction under Wijetunga, accusations of ditching of the Premadasa legacy, internal squabbles, and allegations of massive corruption and bribery.

Though Wijetunga appears to have made up with the leader of the CWC and cabinet Minister Mr. Thondaman by apologising privately to the latter for 'any hurt he might have caused', it cannot be said that the UNP's alliance with the CWC is in good shape. If the UNP wants the CWC's alliance to remain strong, Mr. Thondaman wants President Wijetunga to sideline the CWC's dissident General Secretary Mr. Sellasamy and not to interfere with the internal affairs of the CWC. It looks as if Mr. Sellasamy's days in the CWC are numbered, particularly following the submission by him to the President of a document containing a series of allegations of disloyalty by Mr. Thondaman towards the UNP government.

The President's plans to bring Gamini Dissanayake into the Government and give him a cabinet portfolio seem to have been thwarted up to now. Gamini's re-entry into the mainstream of UNP politics and joining Wijetunga's cabinet depends on his first becoming a Member of Parliament. There is at present no vacancy and none of the National List UNP MPs have expressed their readiness to resign to help Gamini. In fact despite the many demands made by the President, not one MP has agreed to relinquish his position.

Rumour has it that the anti-Gamini faction in the UNP, which is opposed to him assuming a major role in the ruling party, have persuaded some MPs who were initially prepared to resign not to do so. Some of the Nationalist MPs have indicated that they would be prepared to resign in favour of the late President's wife, Mrs. Hema Premadasa, to enable her to be nominated as an MP and to the cabinet as a Minister. The youthful Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe is also rumoured to be against the move to give a high profile role in the UNP and the government to the ambitious Gamini because of the fear that the latter may pose a dangerous challenge to the former. However, President Wijetunga is determined to bring Gamini into his cabinet, and pressure of various kinds is being applied to get one of the MPs to resign to make way for Gamini.

In the meantime, the Housing and Construction Minister Sirisena Cooray who was forced by President Wijetunga to resign his post of General Secretary of the UNP is literally in the political doghouse. During President Premadasa's regime, Mr. Cooray was well known as his leader's hatchet man. Whether true or not, during his lifetime Premadasa was accused by his political opponents of being responsible for many killings of political opponents and that Sirisena Cooray as his lifelong ally was said to have been the linkman to Colombo's violent underworld.

The recent upsurge in the violent infighting between two notorious underworld gangs has had the unfortunate effect of dragging Mr. Cooray right into the centre of controversy. On 3 May, Chintaka Amarasinghe Perera alias Chintaka, the leader of one of the gangs, who was in custody facing many criminal charges including murder, was shot at and injured within the precincts of the Negombo Magistrates Court. The police had information that the leader of the rival gang, Arambawelage Don Upali Ranjith alias Soththy Upali, was responsible for the shooting incident, and having laid a dragnet took him into custody on 13 May. They found two repeater shot guns and nineteen rounds of ammunition in his possession.

In a case filed in the Supreme Court alleging violation of his fundamental rights, Chintaka alleges that the gang headed by Soththi Upali had killed nine members of his family including his father, and that when he was held in the police cell, officers of the Criminal Detective Bureau allowed Soththi Upali to enter the cell and assault him with police batons.

Some believe that a proper investigation into the activities of the two gangland leaders would bring to light much needed information about several unresolved murders, including political ones.

Now the relationship between Soththi Upali and the UNP and Sirisena Cooray is proving a major political embarrassment.

It is now established that Soththi Upali is a member of the All Island Executive Committee of the UNP, and he owned a construction company called Prasanthika Constructions Ltd to which many government contracts were given during Premadasa's and Wijetunga's presidency. Among the contracts given to him were to turf the Gam Udawa Exhibition site at Gampaha, to do up the playground of Rahula College at Katugastota, which was being reconstructed from a donation of Rs.5 million given by President Wijetunga. He was also given the contract to run canteens in all Gam Udawa functions.

Answering allegations that Soththi

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Upali sometimes operated under him, and stating that he knew that Soththi Upali was a 'gang leader', Mr. Sirisena Cooray told the *Sunday Times* (Colombo) that it was President Premadasa who included the gang leader in the UNP's executive committee, and that the present President also knew him well. 'I have have no close connection with Soththi Upali, but we cannot forget how he helped the UNP during the last Presidential election where there was an attempt by the JVP to disrupt the elections. We have party members at various levels, we cannot forget what Upali did for the party. He used to help the party by pasting posters during the 1988 Presidential election when few people dared to oppose the JVP.'

Mr. Cooray added that Premadasa was impressed by Upali's devotion to his work and even if there was a curfew, he and his boys would work. During the presidential election time, 'He and his boys offered to work for the UNP. They helped in setting up stages for meetings, decorating and putting up posters despite the JVP threat. So when Mr. Premadasa became President, he nominated Soththi Upali to Executive Committee of the UNP, and so Soththi thereby became a fully fledged party man.' By his own admission, Mr. Cooray confirms that the UNP had been employing known underworld violent elements like Soththi Upali in fighting its electoral battles and political opponents.

The recent police raid on his residence indicates how low has Mr. Cooray fallen from the high politically powerful pedestal he had once occupied. The police party had disarmed some of his bodyguards who have had Special Task Force training. Mr. Cooray lamented that he did not know why the government and the leadership was treating him in this way after he had served the government and the party loyally for all these years.

'Things today have gone a full circle. With Mr. Premadasa's capacity to be a fearless and strong leader with the support of Ministers, armed services and with much popularity, there was a vilifying campaign against him. At that time, I was never implicated that I had helped him to do anything wrong. Now the guns are turned on me since I was close to the late President. I am extremely hurt, disappointed and sometimes even angry at this concerted effort at character assassination. Now I am a prime target for character assassination.

Enjoying the 'feel good factor' for the first time in a number of years, the Peoples Alliance issued a statement saying that the bitter internal factionalism within the UNP has now taken the form of a no-holds-barred struggle for power between two major groups within the UNP, and that the country would witness the heads of those who are defeated in the power struggle rolling.

★ Tamil Response

Provoked by the strident majoritarian attitude of President Wijetunga, and his recent statements denying the existence of an ethnic problem, leading Tamils living in Colombo have responded by forming the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo. The first meeting of this group summoned by Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress was recently held at the BMICH, which was attended by 80 leading Tamils.

A statement signed by its President Dr. K. Velayuthapillai and Secretary Dr. S. Sathananthan issued after the meeting states:

'There is a Tamil Problem in Sri Lanka. It is a political issue which has matured over the past 50 years. This has been acknowledged by the Sinhala people and by their political leadership in pacts, agreements, election manifestos, conferences of political parties and select committees of parliament. Yet no solution has been found. Meanwhile Tamils in Sinhala majority areas were repeatedly attacked in pogroms, beginning in 1956.

'Hostilities have been raging in the North-Eastern Province (NEP) for the last 10 years. Thousands of Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala youth have been killed or maimed. Property worth millions damaged or destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of Tamils have become refugees in their own country and in other lands.

'Most Sinhala political parties still refuse to put forward political proposals to resolve the Tamil problem. Even worse, some of these parties have dishonestly retreated from previously agreed positions. Tamils DEPLORE this intransigence and duplicity of Sinhala politicians.

'A more sinister trend has emerged during the past one year. Sections within the Government and Opposition are peddling the baseless view that there is NO Tamil problem; but that there is ONLY a "terrorist" problem. Tamils CONDEMN this crude attempt to re-write the history of protest, struggle and sacrifice of Tamils as a transparent justification for pursuing State terror against Tamils to the exclusion of a political solution.

'Tamils also STRONGLY CONDEMN the blatantly racist and provocatively rabid anti-Tamil and anti-Muslim statements made in recent times by the Head of State. For example, it was said that:

(1) Tamils and Muslims are "creepers" who cannot have an existence apart from the Sinhala "tree".

(2) Tamils cannot be first-class citizens.

(3) A Tamil cannot aspire to be the President of Sri Lanka.

(4) If Eelam is declared in the north, Tamils in the south will have to go north and there they will have to eat sand.

(5) Tamils have other countries to go to.

(6) Sri Lanka is Sinhala land.

(7) Future Sinhala generations must be able to claim Sri Lanka as their own.

'A diabolical DISINFORMATION campaign is also being mounted that 50 per cent of Tamils in the NEP have been driven out of their traditional homeland by "terrorist" activities of the LTTE and that those Tamils are living "happily" among the Sinhalese under the "protection" of the Government.

'In fact, the NEP is a "war zone" and the Tamils are fleeing the NEP in large numbers to escape ongoing military operations, aerial bombardment and crippling economic strangulation by the Government. This has led to scarcity of essentials and lack of basic health, educational and other facilities. Some of those who remain there are living in refugee camps amidst indescribable filth and squalor. Tamil youth in the NEP are picked up for no reason. Some disappear. Others are kept in detention for long periods without trial and denied access to relatives. They are tortured. Confessions are "manufactured" in respect of every Tamil picked up.

'Tamils in Colombo are a people under siege. They come from the NEP, up-country and other parts of Sri Lanka and are living on borrowed time. They PROTEST strongly against the arbitrary arrest, detention, extortion, unrelenting harassment and humiliation meted out by the security forces and their Tamil allies. They undergo untold social and economic difficulties. Some live in refugee camps under horrific conditions.

In the past Tamils in Colombo have depended on one or the other major Sinhala party to remedy their political

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Govt's Counter-Insurgency Programme and LTTE's Military Response

by our Special Correspondent

Some defence analysts in Colombo, who have been following the turbulent and bloody course of Eelam War Two, seem to think that the LTTE is showing signs of military decline. Operation 'White Eagle' which was launched southwest of Trincomalee and Operation 'Jayamaga' which was launched northwest of Vavuniya towards last week of April by the Sri Lankan army have further strengthened their view that the LTTE is actually and finally running out of steam.

Although it may be said that the question whether the Tigers are in military decline cannot be answered until one sees the effectiveness with which they can resist the army's next attempt to advance into the Jaffna Peninsula, it is nevertheless relevant to examine the current military status of the LTTE in the border areas of the north and the hinterland of the eastern province, in order to arrive at a fair picture of Sri Lanka's military situation as the crucial Presidential and Parliamentary elections approach.

If the LTTE is actually facing problems in keeping up its ability to defend its territorial possessions in the north and to mount enough pressure on the army in the east so as to compel it to spread thin a large portion of its forces in that province, on the basis of the LTTE's behaviour in the past, it is possible that Prabhakaran might either attempt to strike a deal of mutual convenience with one of the major Sinhala parties or contest the elections by proxy. It is this prospect that has given a certain measure of political significance to the question of the possible military decline of the Tigers. However, it should be pointed out at the outset that many tend to believe that the apparent inability of the Tigers to display their former military prowess in the east, and in the face of operation 'Jayamaga' in the Wanni may largely be due to the diversion of the greater part of their military resources to a possible massive and concerted preparatory exercise aimed at overrunning one of the large base complexes of the army in the northern province.

But this can also mean that the LTTE currently finds itself in a situation where it has to forego a tactical advantage in the east and lose valuable territory in the Wanni in order to prepare for a major assault which would again involve the depletion of manpower and other military assets and may not achieve the desired strategic objective. Therefore the argument that the recent signs of the LTTE's military weakness are deceptive because they actually indicate a concentration of its strength elsewhere with a view to strike the army decisively and irreparably, does not hold much water – unless of course the LTTE overruns the northern Palali base which is the largest combined air, naval and military complex in the island. Let us then consider firstly the LTTE's current position in the eastern province.

The ability of a guerrilla group to operate successfully in the eastern province is derived from five vast hinterland zones comprising the dry zone jungle, shrub, marshes, wasteland, slash and burn plots and paddy fields separated from the populated coastal areas of the province by lagoons and jungle. These zones have Sinhala majority regions to their west which are also sparsely populated – being recently developed agricutural settlements. Another important advantage afforded by all these areas, except one, is that they lie not very far from safe landing points on the coast, thereby making them logistically excellent for sustained guerrilla operations.

The first of these zones – if one were to begin the enumeration from the northernmost point of the east – stretches from the jungles to the west of the Muslim dominated town of Pulmoddai, known for the Titanium rich Ilmenite sands on its shores, to the jungles above the now deserted Tiriyai. The second one is located to the west of the destroyed village of Kumburupiddy and stretches upto the jungles above Moraweva. The third zone which hit the news recently following Operation 'White Eagle', lies to the southwest of Mutur at that strategic juncture where the Polannaruwa, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts meet. The fourth zone is located south of the Verugal river and north of the Polannaruwa-Batticaloa road between Welikanda and Valaichenai. The fifth one is generally known as the Vadamunai area – taking its name from a tiny impoverished hamlet at its northwestern end, not far from the Sinhala border and which became well known after the then Mahaveli Minister, Gamini Dissanayake's aborted attempt in 1984 to settle thousands of Sinhalese there almost overnight. This zone lies between the Badulla-Chenkaladi road and the Welikanda-Valaichenni road. The sixth one is the well known Paduvankarai region west of Batticaloa across the lagoon. Of all the zones, this is the most populated and economically prosperous zone. The seventh one is known as the Kanjikudicha Aaru jungle and is located west of the trunk road between Thirukovil and Pottuvil on the southeastern coast of the Ampara district.

From the beginning of Eelam War Two the army has been engaged in a massive and costly counter insurgency program to 'root out' or 'reduce to a manageable level' the influence of the LTTE in all of these seven zones.

Three special centres were set up in Weli Oya – at the Independent Brigade headquarters, in Maduru Oya west of the Thoppikkal Hill in the Vadamunai zone – at the special base set up in 1993 for the special forces (S.F.), and in Kondawattuwan in the Amapara district – at the Infantry Training School. In addition to these, the Directorate of Military Intelligence trained, armed and set up special para-military groups comprising ex-Tamil militants, to aid and assist the counter insurgency operations of the Special Forces (S.F.) commandos. The Mohan group became the most notorious of these. The army adopted the standard British-American counter insurgency model to fight the LTTE In the east. The main aim of this counter insurgency program was to limit and, if possible, ultimately destroy the LTTE's logistics and tactical mobility along with its popular support among the Tamils.

The army adopted the following methods prescribed in British and U.S. counter insurgency handbooks with a view to limiting the supplies

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which the civilian population was thought to be making available to the LTTE. (In fact the Prime Minister even quoted from a book on the British counter insurgency program in Malaysia while explaining the government's strategy for fighting the war in parliament):

a) Complete evacuation or destruction of villages. This is generally considered by all western counter insurgency experts as the best way to hit at the main source of sustenance for guerrillas in their base areas. Hundreds of villages in the less visible interior parts of all seven zones described above stand derelict or completely destroyed as a result. In zone one even the main population centre, Tiriyai has not been spared. Today only about 7 or 8 destitute old people live there under the watchful eye of the army. About 9 small settlements around it such as Kallampathai are no more. The fate of Tiriyai is attributed to the fact that its location and prosperity made it extremely convenient for Tiger groups moving into the east from the north to rest and replenish their supplies. Kumburuppidy, the main village in zone two, and before 1990 the most prosperous in the whole district, is a mound of rubble for the same reason. Several Tamil villages on the cultivated edge of zone three such as L.B. 3 and Nilapolai have met with the same fate. Plus many more such as Thonikkal, Kirimichai, Anaisudda Kulam etc., in zone four; Perilla Weli, Kudumbi Malai, Oothuchenai, Miyankal etc in zone five; the remote settlements oif Unnichai and Thanthamalai in zone six; and Thangavelayuthapuram, Udumpankulam, Thandiady, Rufus, Periyathalavai etc., in zone seven are some of the impoverished Tamil hamlets which have also been completely erased from the face of the earth as part of the army's Eelam War Two C.I. (Counter Insurgency) programme in order to deny sustenance to Tiger attack groups which may operate in these seven zones.

b) Destruction of crops and prevention of cultivation:- This standard C.I. method recommended by most western military handbooks and known in the past as the scorched earth policy of conventional wars, has been central to the army's effort to limit supplies derived from the civilian population to the LTTE. In each of the seven hinterland zones of the eastern province, thousands of acres of fertile paddy and cash crop fields lie derelict as a result of this policy. In zone five alone, according to Joseph Pararajasingham M.P. for Batticaloa, sixty thousand acres belonging to a paddy belt called the Perilla Weli Kandam cannot yet be cultivated because of the ban imposed by the army. The meagre crops of some stragglers who escaped mass evacuations and destruction of settlements west of Perilla Weli and in the far reaches of zones one, two, four and seven are regularly destroyed whenever Special Forces groups of the army come upon them. The frail structures put up by the cultivators to live in and guard their crops are also set on fire, in order to compel them to seek a refugee camp under army control without tarrying in the jungle. Despite this some individuals return to risk another try. This accounts for the fluctuating number of recent refugees in camps that were set up under army supervision to shelter people driven out thus from the seven zones. (Very few foreign observers have seen these camps mainly because most, if not all, western missions in Colombo which believe that the success of the current C.I. program of the army in the east is key to the 'restoration of the democratic process' in the Tamil region, do not want to be seen throwing the spanner into the works, as it were, by asking their countrymen to visit these places). The Komari, Thambalagamam, Thirukovil and Pethalai (near Valaichenai) camps are among several which shelter victims of this C.I. method.

c) Control of supplies to civilians living near rebel areas:- This method in effect applies wherever Tamils live in the hinterland zones of the east. The Muslim town of Pulmoddai in northern Trinco has also been subjected to the strictures of this method since the beginning of Eelam War Two because the army strongly suspects that Muslims here help the LTTE. There is a shortage of medicine in this town as a consequence. Certain items such as chocolates, batteries, aluminium sheets, steel rods, wire etc are still banned beyond the town of Akkaraipattu in the Amparai district. The army ensures that in all seven zones there is direct control on, and supervision of, the amount of food and medicine each family buys and takes into their area of residence. Many are often arrested and questioned for buying more provisions than what the STF or the S.F. consider adequate for the families of the suspects.

The overall effect of these C.I. methods aimed at undermining the material and moral support base of the LTTE In the east has, over the last three years, made the populations in the hinterland zones quite war weary. The local government elections, from the C.I. point of view, were held to present a way out for the war weary people in the hinterlands of the east. The LTTE's main weakness in the province is that it has not been able to counter this problem by cultivating ideological commitment, stepping up interaction through social service, cultural and educational programs, aimed at preventing the sense of alienation arising from war weariness among the hinterland populations. The manner in which the Viet Cong handled the same problem in such strategic zones in their country is a case in point.

In fact the LTTE is playing into the army's hands, much to the satisfaction of its C.I. experts, by engaging in tax collection in these zones most of the time. The absence of frequent and spectacular attacks in the east has also contributed to a certain lack of enthusiasm, and hence recruits. In addition to the standard C.I. methods described above, the deployment of small and highly mobile special forces commandos which are constantly roaming one part or the other of the hinterland zones has greatly reduced the tactical mobility of the LTTE in the field and resulted in the loss of a large number of important Tiger cadres. Prabhakaran's answer to this problem has been to pull out his key commanders and political workers from the east. This has led to a further decline in the LTTE's actual military and political influence in the east. This state of affairs in the hinterland zones of the province has enabled the army to manage the populated areas of the east largely by saturating them with police personnel who are given some additional training for working in 'terrorist areas'. As long as the LTTE finds life difficult in the hinterland zones, it cannot effectively threaten the main population centres of the province, even when they are maintained by the police, who are no match at all to seasoned Tiger combatants. Therefore, soon after the local government elections, the army was able to pull out a large number of its troops from the east

without jeopardising the consolidated gains of its C.I. program. Those troops were soon redeployed in the north.

The LTTE meanwhile seems to be concentrating on large scale and spectacular attacks on military bases, which require long and patient information gathering, special training and logistical preparation. All this forces the Tiger leadership to divert precious resources needed for regularly engaging in widespread guerrilla operations. As a result the army has found plenty of time to rest and re-train its troops which were heavily battered and incessantly harassed during the first two years of Eelam War Two. In fact the whole of last year, there were only eighteen days of actual combat – though of high intensity and ferocity.

Despite the set backs and humiliation, the overall military situation in the northeast seems to have improved in the army's favour, when one considers the effect of C.I. program in the east and the free time the army has had to rethink and revamp its defense systems in the north and to focus more on training the foot soldier, particularly after Lt. Gen. Gerry Silva took over as army chief. Operation 'Jayamaga' indicates clearly that the army is also interested in implementing a different kind of C.I. program in the north. The large number of troops which were pulled out of the east enabled the army to capture and hold on to the 60 square kilometer territory northwest of Vavuniya. The significance of this operation is that it was aimed at, and succeeded in bringing under the army's control, the green belt of the Vavuniya district.

The idea is to develop this green belt prosperously and woo the larger portion of the population of those areas of the district still under Tiger control. The plan seems to be directed at depriving the LTTE of the resource areas of the Wanni districts over an extended period of time. The army will proceed apace with this plan if it can pull out more and more troops from the east. Preoccupied as it is with the military glory of large scale attacks in and around the peninsula, the LTTE is not in a position to counter the longterm, indirect and creeping victory which the army is interested in achieving, though as in the east, at a tremendous cost to the Tamil civilian population.

THE TAMILS IN DIASPORA

Self Determination in Western Melting Pots[1]

by Rajan Philips[2]

The post-1983 out-migration of Sri Lankan Tamils from their island home and their settlement, in large numbers, in Western countries has created a unique situation for the traditional social organization of the Tamils, their culture and their ethos. In one sense, hundreds of thousands of Tamils who fled the crucible of self-determination at home have landed in the huge urban melting pots in Canada, Australia, Great Britain and a number of European countries. More importantly, however, despite the assurance of safety and security and the promise of material opportunities, most Tamil emigres experience a void in their lives, a void shared by the early generations of all immigrants. They are victims of a painful rupture between their immediate past and the immigrant present. The gap between their natal memories and their uprooted existence, not to mention the leap, for most of them, from tropical sunshine into the freezing winter, is almost unbearably unbridgeable.

Postmodernist creative writers have portrayed the predicaments of these twentieth century nomads. Tamils are not unknown for literary escapism, and sooner or later we will have in our hands creative tales of the Tamilian diasporic experiences. In the meantime, there are other earthly matters that deserve our attention. My purpose is to offer a few comments on the future of the Tamil ethos in a western milieu. I will try to provide some understanding of the Tamil social organization and its evolution through different socio-historical circumstances. By socio-historical circumstances I refer to the origins of a Tamil social organization in Sri Lanka, the colonial encounter, the trauma in independent Sri Lanka, and the current diasporic experiences.

Tamil Social Organization

The origins of the Tamil social organization in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka have been traced to the medieval period preceding the arrival of the European colonists. The core characteristics of this organization, which have by and large survived to this day, include a well developed language; the predominantly Saivite version of Hinduism; a caste system based on the South Indian caste system but with some unique variations; family and kinship structures and a property system whose reproduction is ensured through endogamic marriage practices and devolution of property along both male and female lines. Despite their extensive rights over property, women were assigned a subordinate role at home and in society. In sum, the social organization, like in every other South Asian social group, was unequal, hierarchical, and male dominated.

The economic life of the Tamils before the beginning of the colonial rule, was based on agriculture, fishing, and trade within and outside the island. Theirs was an essentially subsistence economy that left little surplus by way of resources or leisure time to indulge in the frills of art and culture to any remarkable degree. However, they managed to develop a strong tradition of popular education, and made significant progress in the areas of Tamil literature, indigenous medicine, and astrology.

The Colonial Encounter

During the four hundred years of European colonial rule, every aspect of the Tamilian social organization and economic life was put to the test. The essence of the Tamil genius was in taking material advantage of the

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[1] This is a modified version of an article published in the *Tenth Anniversary Publication of the Society for the Aid of Ceylon Minorities (SACM)*, Toronto, Canada.

[2] Rajan Philips used to write under the pseudonym 'Amali'; he was a founder member and secretary of MIRJE, and was associated with the publication of the *Saturday Review*. He now lives in Waterloo, Canada.

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colonial encounter while maintaining the core characteristics of the Tamil social organization. Put another way, the Tamils internalized the impacts of colonialism through flexible and dualistic strategies. They adopted a functional, enterprising, and even an individualistic approach to receiving Christian education and exploiting the employment and business opportunities that were spun off by the British plantation economy in Ceylon and in distant colonies like Burma, Malaya, and Singapore. While adapting themselves to the changing economic circumstances, the Tamils preserved their social order based on religion, hierarchy, kinship, male domination, and caste. Even the effects of Christianization of significant sections of the Tamil society were internalized, in that the Tamil converts to Christianity remained within the same social contours of caste and kinship as their Hindu counterparts.

I would argue that there were two principal factors, namely, the territorial integrity of the Tamils within the island and the numerical preponderance of their dominant castes, that accounted for the coexistence of social rigidity with the readiness for occupational flexibility. While their natal provinces insulated them from external influences, there was not a critical mass of deprived people within the Tamil society whose emancipation would have required changes in the social order. One might contrast this situation with the DMK led social reform movement among the Tamils in South India, which derived its sustenance from the determination of the numerically larger non-Brahmin castes to end centuries of Brahmin dominance over them. As well, successive generations of Sri Lankan Tamil leaders proved themselves to be venerable bulwarks of social orthodoxy and political reaction in the wider Sri Lankan society; to wit, the opposition to universal suffrage in the 1920s, and the lifelong aversion to the left wing political parties whose electoral support never extended beyond the Sinhalese, but who were, nevertheless, expected to be scrupulous about the rights of all minorities, including the Tamils.

Independence and After

My emphasis on the social rigidity of the Tamils should not be taken to mean that there have not been any changes in the Tamil society over the years. From the beginning of this century, particularly after the constitutional changes of 1931 and 1947/1948, and thanks to the efforts of first the Tamil Congress and then the Federal Party, the Sri Lankan Tamils have achieved a modern sense of national identity that unites them at the political level despite the traditional cleavages at the social level. At the social level itself, the occupational basis of caste has been considerably weakened, while the boundaries for marriage alliances have been relatively widened. On the negative side, the practice of dowry which might have been intended to devolve on daughters their share of the family property, has degenerated into a debasing phenomenon of price-tagging women in what is shamelessly called the 'marriage market'.

Be that as it may, the challenges that arose in independent Sri Lanka were directed more at the economic well being of the Tamils than at their social organization. To a large extent, these challenges were the outcome of a cultivated, but misplaced, perception among the Sinhalese that they had been relatively deprived vis-a-vis the Tamils in regard to commercial and employment opportunities under the British rule. As it turned out, given the conditions of an underdeveloped market economy, the overpoliticized nature of the Sri Lankan society along with its immature liberal democratic traditions, and the constantly revived and dangerously interpreted myths and memories of battles between ancient Sinhala and Tamil chieftains, an essentially twentieth century economic competition between the Tamils and Sinhalese has become a timeless war between their leaders and their standing armies.

Tamils in Diaspora

This brings me to the situation of the large number of Tamils who were forced to leave the island on account of the war, and who are now domiciled in the western industrialized countries. Their situation is fundamentally different from the previous historical circumstances. They lack the protective space of their natal provinces in Sri Lanka, which for centuries had enabled them to live in and reproduce their social organization. In Canada and elsewhere, the Tamils have been thrown into huge urban melting pots of competing cultures.

The problems that the Tamils are facing in coping with their new situation should be viewed at two levels: at the level of the older generation and at the level of their children, or the younger generation. There is, in fact, a generational dichotomy involving the expatriate Tamil parents and their children. What they have lost in terms of the protective space that they enjoyed in their natal provinces, the Tamil parents are able to compensate through modern technology and means of communication. Through instant communication facilities they are able to preserve the extended family relationships despite their spatial separation across the world. Computer aided printing has spawned a number of Tamil weeklies and magazines in all the western capitals; before long there will be simultaneous publication of Tamil magazines in different countries to serve the emerging international Tamil media market.

The Tamils in Canada have taken advantage of the government policy of multiculturalism in establishing NGOs and voluntary organizations to provide help and guidance to new Tamil immigrants, and also to undertake activities and organize cultural events that are reminiscent of their traditional life experiences in Sri Lanka. The increasing Tamil population has also created a market and an incentive for the opening of restaurants, grocery stores, video stores and other commercial establishments. More significantly, Sri Lankan Tamils, both Hindus and Christians, have organized their own places of worship and provided for their traditional ritualistic needs.

In short, Sri Lankan Tamils have, in a matter of a few years, added their own little universe to the multiplicity of immigrant ethnic universes that have become a standard feature of the large 'heteropolitan' urban centres of North America. But the question now is whether the Tamil universes in Canada and elsewhere can survive and reproduce themselves to the same extent as the Tamil social organization in Sri Lanka had survived and reproduced itself for centuries on end. What I am posing here as an abstract question is in fact a very concrete apprehension that many Tamils have over the 'cultural future' of their children in western societies.

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Cultural Dilemma

So far, I have tried to provide, rather inoffensively, a critique of our social system. I commented on the external and internal factors that have accounted for the longevity of the core characteristics of our social organization in the past, in our natal provinces. In comparison, the future of the younger generation of Tamils living in the west is already being shaped by external forces of change that are stronger than what had buffeted their ancestors. The internal defenses available to the expatriate Tamil parents are, by and large, irrelevant to their children. Let me elaborate.

Tamil children are torn between devotionally religious homes and progressively secular schools and society. The linguistic pride of the Tamils and their long struggle for language rights in their own country are hardly of any relevance to the Tamil children learning English, French, or other European languages in the west. The hierarchy of the Tamil social structure, based on age, gender, and caste, and the main vehicles of its reproduction, namely, arranged marriages and property devolution, are simply not the norms that the Tamil children encounter in their schools, among peers, and in the media. Traditional kinship units that flourished within the natal provinces are now thinly spread across the world. While the expatriate Tamil parents diligently keep contact with their kinsmen around the globe, their children are not likely to be as dedicated to preserving transcontinental kinship ties.

Softening Efforts

All the same, the Tamil children cannot, in one revolving motion, turn their backs on their cultural background, any more than they could succeed in a swift assimilation into the dominant western culture. Their cultural dilemma, to give it the best possible construction, is perhaps captured in Jawaharlal Nehru's oft-repeated description of himself as 'a queer mixture of the east and the west, at home nowhere, and out of place everywhere'. But despite our best hopes, and beneath the ideals of Nehru's world view and cultural outlook, there is a whole humanity that is caught up in cultural tensions to varying degrees, and on a daily basis. There is no quick-fix remedy to their cultural woes. But a society must take responsibility for softening the cultural tensions that have a bearing on the psyche and the development of its children. The softening efforts should be undertaken both at home and at the societal level.

To begin with, parents should avoid raising cultural fences around their children that would inhibit their natural growth and development within a cosmopolitan setting. There is also a definite need for parents to adapt themselves to the new surroundings, particularly in areas that are likely to create conflicting and even embarrassing life experiences for the children within and outside the home. We should wean ourselves from the traditional authoritarian habits at home, and from hierarchical notions based on age, or gender; they are indeed relics from the patriarchal age of command structure, when labour was divided among the members of a family and among the families within clan or village, but in relation to the same economic activity (for e.g., farming, fishing etc.). Today, the father, mother, and the children have their separate and independent daily routines, and at least for that reason, the older and the stronger members in a household should extend due regard and respect to the privacy of the younger and the gentler members – to the privacy of their time, and even of their space. There is an even more compelling reason for jettisoning the old, petty, browbeating ways; for, familial love has a great deal more in common with equal treatment, sharing in domestic chores, good listening, and consensus seeking, than with paternal diktats, no matter how benign or well intended the latter might be.

The softening efforts at the societal level, should be directed at mediating between our traditional sense of our history and cultural heritage on the one hand, and the western, cosmopolitan, and multicultural realities of the world of our children, on the other. Put another way, Tamil language training to our children in the western countries should not turn out to be similar to the manner in which Latin was forced down the throats of our parents in an earlier era. As far as possible, language training should be supplemented by readings in English of our literary and cultural traditions. Forty years ago, Sri Lankan Tamil literati spearheaded a movement for interpreting Tamil culture to the Western Indologists and Orientalists, as well as to those Tamils who, for whatever reasons, had to turn to Engish to understand and appreciate their heritage. Given the historical context in which it was launched, the movement was well received and immensely successful. Since then, the terms **Tamiliana** and **Tamilology** have become part of academic vocabulary. Expatriate Tamils, who are concerned with the 'cultural future' of their children, may want to turn to these earlier efforts for inspiration and guidance.

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grievances. But their hopes have been cruelly shattered in every instance. Dangerous attempts are now being made to not only humiliate Tamils but also to put back the political clock in Sri Lanka. Tamils in Colombo are firm in their belief that rights of Tamils in Colombo can be established only through co-ordinated and concrete action. They resolve to organize themselves politically and to take action in solidarity with Tamils in the rest of Sri Lanka.

'It is inevitable that Tamils in Colombo do not any longer expect most Sinhala political parties, left on their own, to deal with the Tamil problem with any degree of honesty or sincerity. Therefore we now appeal to the Sinhala people.

'As a first step, Tamils in Colombo call upon the Sinhala people:

(1) To recognize through their political leadership the inalienable right of self-determination of the Tamils.

(2) To place, forthwith and publicly, their proposals for the resolution of the Tamil problem through their political leadership.

(3) Through their political leadership begin negotiations immediately for a political solution to the Tamil problem.

The Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC)'.

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Abuse of Executive Presidential Power

Exercise of Presidential Pardon

by

J.F.A Soza, *Retired Judge of the Supreme Court; Chairman, Human Rights Task Force.* **Desmond Fernando,** *President's Counsel; Former President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka; Secretary-General of the International Bar Association; Member, Executive Committee of the International Commission of Jurists.* **Professor G.L. Peiris,** *Professor of Law and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Colombo.*

We refer to the circumstances of the case in which a Presidential pardon was recently granted to two persons, Shelton Nimal Peiris and W.M. Bandula Jayadewa, who had been convicted of the offence of attempted culpable homicide not amounting to murder, and sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment each.

In our view, the striking features of this case are the following:

(i) after conviction, these persons failed to appear before the High Court of Kurunegala on 11th December 1992, when they were directed to do so, in order that the sentence may be carried out;

(ii) on the same date warrants were issued through the police against both convicted persons, but these warrants were not served;

(iii) the High Court thereafter issued open warrants against them on four different occasions spanning a total period of almost an year. The open warrants were issued on 5th January, 26th November, 1st December and 3rd December 1993. Notwithstanding all these steps, the Kuliyapitiya Police failed to take the two convicted persons into custody and to have them produced before the High Court;

(iv) one of the convicted persons was a member of the Urban Council of Kuliyapitiya and also President of the Kuliyapitiya Private Bus Owners' Association;

(v) on 15th December 1993 the Judge of the High Court of Kurunegala directed the Registrar of the Court to address a letter to the Inspector-General of Police stating that information was available to the Court that the convicted persons were moving about freely in Kuliyapitiya town and that the Police had nevertheless failed to take them into custody;

(vi) in these circumstances the Registrar of the High Court, on the direction of the High Court Judge, called upon the IGP to take immediate action to take both convicted persons into custody and to have them produced before the Court withut delay;

(vii) within 2 days of this communication being addressed by the High Court of Kurunegala to the IGP, the President of the Republic took action under Article 34 (1) of the Constitution to grant a free pardon to both convicted persons;

(viii) the effect of exercise of the Presidential prerogative in this case is not merely to reduce the sentence but to permit the accused persons to go home without serving a single day of the 3 year sentence imposed on them.

The media have subsequently published the text of a statement made in this connection in Parliament during the debate on the Emergency.

The gist of this statement is that the Presidential pardon was granted after considering an affidavit by the victim in this case, an ayurvedic physician named Ranjith Sumanasiri who was shot and wounded; that the victim of the shooting had made representations against punishment being meted out to the convicted persons; and that the victim had adopted this attitude because, **inter alia**, gunshot injuries which he had sustained, had healed by this time.

We are convinced that the issues involved in this matter are of overriding public importance and impinge crucially on core values in respect of the administration of justice in our country. It is to us a matter of deep concern that the reasons adduced on the floor of Parliament should have been relied upon by way of justification for exercise of the prerogative of pardon in the circumstances of this case.

We would like to point out to the public that the factors referred to in the statement in Parliament are altogether lacking in validity for two principal reasons.

(a) The fundamental character of criminal liability is that the harm caused by the criminal act goes far beyond the interest of individuals and does serious harm to society. In the case of a civil wrong, the remedy consists of compensation which can be waived by the injured party at will or on his initiative. By contrast, where criminal acts are concerned, punishment cannot, except in the case of compoundable offences, be dispensed with on the basis of the wishes of the person who has sustained injury in consequence of criminal activity. In any event, the principle of compounding an offence at the instance of the injured person has no application whatever **after** conviction and imposition of sentence by a court.

In the case in question, injury was caused to the ayurvedic physician as a result of shooting. These are circumstances in which the interests of the community, especially at a time when violent crime is markedly on the increase in the country, are entitled without any conceivable doubt to prevail over the subjective wishes of the individual who had suffered injury.

It is now claimed, as part of the justification for the Presidential pardon, that the victim, W.A. Sumanasiri, 'had earlier requested the police to withdraw the prosecution'. Nevertheless, the victim himself gave evidence during the non-summary proceedings and was also a key witness for the prosecution during the High Court proceedings. To grant a Presidential pardon to the persons convicted at the trial, on the basis of a change of heart by the victim of the shooting, after he had testified for the prosecution in two distinct judicial proceedings, is to subvert the course of criminal justice.

(b) Of basic significance in this case is the contemptuous and cavalier attitude which the two convicted persons consistently adopted towards the established courts of the country. They displayed this attitude of defiance by refusing to appear before the Court on five different occasions when warrants had been issued to compel their attendance.

Respect for maintenance of law and order and integrity of institutions administering justice cannot possibly by preserved if these attitudes become entrenched in the community. This is a factor of indisputable relevance in determining

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Did Jesus Live in India?

by T. Pathmanathan

No subject in the world has been the subject of so much writing (over 100,000 monographs alone) and of such passionate, even violent, discussion as the personality of Jesus. Yet, it was only during the latter half of the 19th century and, more particularly, during the last few decades that bold academic scholars began to investigate the life of Jesus Christ from **secular** sources as distinct from what was handed down for nearly 2,000 years by purely religious texts and teachings. The objective, historical and critical study of this fascinating subject reached such heights that the eminent German theologian Albert Schweitzer stated: 'the research on the life of Jesus is the most powerful and daring development in independent religious awareness'; it provoked another great German philosopher-writer Goethe to declare 'the entire ecclesiastical history is a mish-mash of error and of power.'

It is necessary therefore, in the interests of objectivity, to approach this subject from a purely academic and secular point of view, relying on contemporary sources and material that can stand the test of authenticity and not as an article of faith or as a polemic on religious philosophy. In other words, one has to keep the historical Jesus distinct and separate from the time-honoured Jesus of the faith, of tradition and christian belief. I have stood with as much reverence in the famed Churches and Cathedrals and Mosques the world over – St. Peter's Rome, the Duomo in Milan, St. Marks in Venice, Notre Dame in Paris, the Aya Sophia in Istanbul, the Jumma Mashid in Delhi – as in the ancient temples of Kancheepuram, Chidambaram, Tanjore, Sarnath and Buddha – Gaya.

At the core of the New Testament are the four gospels named after Mark, Matthew, Luke and John; these are **attributed** to these authors but were compiled generations after the crucifixion of Jesus. Besides these are, not the only gospels; these were selected by the Church fathers between the first and third centuries A.D.; the other gospels – the so-called Books of the Apocrypha – were either lost, destroyed by Gentile Christian writers of later times or treated as heretical by the Catholic Church. In fact much of christian belief is a collection of the teachings, rules and precepts of Paul rather than of what is attributed to Jesus in the gospels. The church historian Wilhelm Nestle states: 'Christianity is the religion founded by Paul; it replaced Christ's gospel with a gospel about Christ' (page 89 in his 'Crisis of Christianity'). Even the famous German philosopher Kant makes a distinction between the teachings of Jesus and those of his disciples or the gospel writers.

The earliest known writings on Jesus are in the 'epistles' of Paul who is more of a historical figure than the gospel writers though his writings pre-date the canonical gospels. But Paul does not mention anything of Jesus's life in a biographical sense; there is no mention of his early life, of his parents, where he was born, where he lived or when he lived; there is no mention of Jesus's parables or miracles or even of his trial before Pontius Pilate. On his own admission Paul never knew the human Jesus and he based his whole faith on a 'vision' he claimed to have received from a 'resurrected' Jesus. As for the gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, which were of a later date, these are not free from contradictions; Ian Wilson in his sensational book 'Jesus – the evidence' – lists these contradictions even on vital matters pertaining to his birth, crucifixion and 'resurrection'. The gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke referred to as the 'Synoptic' gospels were compiled between 70 AD and 80 AD; the gospel of John referred to as the 'fourth' gospel belonged to a later date circa 150 AD to 200 AD. It has never been established by the Church when and how these gospels came into existence as the originals do not exist and therefore the authorship is a matter of belief. Suffice it to say, that as late as November 1965 the Roman Catholic Church declared in Vatican II that God himself 'authored' the Bible; being therefore of 'divine' authorship they are considered (by the Church) to be 'infallible', were, therefore, made canonical and became the bed-rock of christian belief and faith. Faith however cannot be the basis of history. It was Bertrand Russell who remarked 'faith is a strong conviction in something for which there is no evidence'!

Even accepting the gospels at face value, there is however, only scanty information in them, as a biographical source, about the early life of Jesus – his formative years. However, the events that took place in Jerusalem during the life of Jesus have not gone unrecorded.

Contemporary historians relate in great details the momentous events that took place in the first century AD in this region of Judea (where Jesus was born, lived and ministered) which was in a state of political ferment and turmoil. The famous Roman historian Tacitus (55-120 AD) is full of information about King Herod, of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, who presided over the crucifixion of Jesus but Tacitus mentions this momentous event in the history of Christendom only in passing. The other famous Roman historian Pliny (61 AD – 114 AD) mentions 'a religious sect called christians who sing to a Messiah' but does not even mention a word about Jesus Christ; nor does the other contemporary historian Suetonius mention anything about Jesus except a casual reference to 'Christos, an instigator of the Jews'. These historical records (which preceded the gospels) of that period do not mention the extraordinary episodes mentioned in the gospels. The 20th century's greatest New Testament theologian Rudolph Bultmann of Germany concludes 'the true picture of Jesus's life has faded beyond recognition'. Ernest Kasemann, the specialist in studies of the New Testament, states: 'one is overwhelmed by how little of the accounts of Jesus Christ in the New Testament can be called authentic'. The gospels cannot therefore be accepted as a **historical** source; the absence of a historically reliable source has been made worse by the insistence of the Church on equating their own interpretations of biblical accounts with objective fact. One has therefore to look elsewhere for authentic information.

The gospels do not comment or make any reference to Jesus's life between his 13th and 33rd year (i.e. between his presentation in Jerusalem and the period of his ministry 2 decades later). The prime **historical** source of information for the events of the time Jesus lived, is the Jewish historian Josephus of Galilee (37 AD – 100 AD). In his monumental work 'Antiquities of the Jews' he gives detailed descriptions of this period; he mentions Emperor Nero, John the Baptist, King Herod, Governor Pontius Pilate but, strangely, provides only scanty material on the life of Jesus. He mentions Jesus only as 'a wise man who performs astonishing feats' and as 'a teacher with some followers who call themselves christians.' It is however, beyond dispute

that Jesus is a historical figure, born of Jewish parents, who spoke Aramaic; that his name 'Jesus' was an adaptation of the name 'Yeshu' and an abbreviation of 'Joshua' of the Old Testament; that he grew up in Galilee; the name 'Christ' is a derivation from the greek word 'christos' meaning 'the anointed one'. Even according to the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke the period in which Jesus was publicly active lasted only two years; only in the gospel attributed to John is there a reference to Jesus's presence during 'three Passovers' (three years) between 30 AD and 33 AD. Thus, while contemporary historians (Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius of Rome and Josephus of Galilee) refer to him only in passing and do not give him special emphasis or importance, the gospel writers themselves refer to his activities or preachings (so far as his public life is concerned) only during a limited period, namely 2 or 3 years and are silent on his life and activities between his 13th and 33rd years.

The first detailed reference to this 'dark' period of Jesus's life between his 13th and 33rd year – the 20-year period relevant to this paper – is a work called 'The Aquarian Gospel' published in 1844 by an American writer named Levi Dowling – a Chaplain in the US Army who later studied and practised medicine and thereafter devoted himself to the study of religious works. In part 6 and 7 of his book he makes the amazing reference that Jesus spent these 20 years in India!; that after a period of study of the Vedas in the Hindu temple of Jaggannath, he fled from the fury of the Brahmins with whom he had strong differences in religious matters, through the Himalayan foothills into Tibet where he studied the Buddhist scriptures in the Buddhist monastery at Lhasa; and that he finally went back to the Middle East. The conclusions of this writer, however, have no historical or scientific foundation as he states that he got all this from a 'revelation' in a vision. However, it must be remembered that the contents of the canonical gospels are also – as pronounced by the Catholic Church – 'revelations' or prophetic visions like what Paul experienced; it is difficult, therefore, to dismiss the former and accept only the latter for purposes of historical investigation.

In the year 1894, however, the Russian historian and itinerant scholar Nicolai Notowitch in his book 'The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ' recounts in great detail these very same statements mentioned above after a period of study in the Buddhist monastery at Hermis (near Lhasa) at the foot of the Tibetan mountains; he claims to have collected these details, with the help of an interpreter, from manuscripts written in Pali which were, reportedly in the possession of the then Dalai Lama. These accounts of a prophet called 'Issa' (arabic for 'Jesus'), his teachings and his martyrdom bear a remarkable similarity to the details in 'The Aquarian Gospel'! Although Max Muller, the Oxford Indologist, casts doubts on the authenticity of Notowitch's finding, the diaries of the then British Ambassador to the Court of the King of Kashmir has references (page 214) to the arrival in Kashmir of a Russian scholar named Notowitch in 1887 and that he was en route to the Tibetan mountains on a scholastic mission. Further, Swami Abhimedhananda of the Ramakrishna Mission in Calcutta after reading the astonishing account in Notowitch's book also journeyed to the Tibetan monastery in Hermis and confirms Notowitch's findings in his Pali book 'Kashmiri O Tibeth' that he did find this old manuscript in the Buddhist monastery of Hemis and, being fluent in Pali, read the original himself!

Scholastic investigations on this subject did not end there. In 1987, the christian theologian Holgar Kerston of Germany in his comparatively recent book 'Jesus Lived in India' published after 5 years of intensive research arrived at the identical conclusions after a visit to this very same monastery near Lhasa. He states, in astonishing detail, that Jesus around the age of thirteen followed the ancient Silk Route towards India, journeying 5 years, lived in India for over 10 years, studied the Hindu Vedas in 'Juggernant' (Jagannath) and Varanasi (Benares) and later spent 6 years in Lhasa in the Buddhist monastery of Hemis studying the Buddhist Scriptures; he concludes that Jesus finally returned to the Holy Land after a period of intense religious study mastering this vast storehouse of knowledge and spiritual wisdom and becoming a spiritual master himself! It is therefore not a matter of surprise that when Jesus entered Jerusalem around the year 30 AD he was a man of high spiritual calibre, versed not only in matters philosophical but also equipped with the gift of performing miracles. The performance of miracles, however, was not anything new, there being countless examples of miracles having been performed both by the ancient Jewish Rabbis before Jesus in the Middle East and by Sages and Rishi's in India and continue to be performed (e.g. Sai Baba) even today. It must be noted further that the above accounts of Jesus's life (during this period) are corroborated by the internationally renowned Scholar Professor Hasnain, Doctor of Indology and Indian Archaeology, author of several Scholastic publications and once a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago for a short time.

The question now arises as to why Jesus chose to journey to India in search of truth and wisdom – during this period of his life. The answer is not far to seek. According to 'Genesis' (chapter 29) of the Old Testament, Abraham, patriarch of the Hebrews, went to 'the Land of Sons of the East'. According to Joshua (chapter 24, 2-3) of the Old Testament the patriarchs of Israel came from 'the East' and so did the 'three wise men'. In the Bible mention is made of 'the Land of the 5 Rivers' ('the river parted and ran into 4 heads'); **nowhere in the Middle East** or in the World is there a country with a river with 5 tributaries except in India – only the river Indus, in North West India, fits the description perfectly i.e. 'Punjab', the land of 5 rivers ('pun' in Sanskrit and Tamil means 5) the land of one of the earliest known civilisations (Harappa and Mahenjadaro), in the World, circa 3500 B.C.

Further, the close connection between Kashmir and the ancient Jews (Israelites) can even today be corroborated in their place names and even words. 'The language of Kashmir derives from Hebrew' concludes the Arabic Scholar and Linguist, Abdul Azad, after drawing a list of such similar even identical words and names. It is significant that the language of the Kashmiris is different from that of all other languages in India. Dr. George Moore in his scholarly work 'The Lost Tribes of Israel' refers to Hebrew inscriptions in archaeological sites in India – in Taxila in the Punjab region a stone inscription in Aramaic, the language that Jesus (and the Jews) spoke, was found and deciphered. In their appearance, their semitic physiognamy, their clothes, folklore and habits (like wearing of caps by men like the jomulkas of the Jews and the wearing of scarves and belts by Kashmiri and Israeli women) confirm this theory of their close similarity.

This article has considered the view of Biblical scholars, archaeologists, linguists, historians and the like and draws on oral and written tradition as well; it deals with facts, coincidences and suggestions; what emerges is less a thesis than a series of fascinatingly similar facts and possibilities. The distances of time and space, the power of faith and tradition, the dogmatism and authority of the established church

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SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

Veteran Communist Leader to Retire

Mr. Jyoti Basu, India's best-known Communist leader, is considering retirement from politics.

After five decades on centre-stage, Mr. Basu, the 80-year-old Chief Minister of West Bengal, is looking at the option of retirement to supposedly facilitate the emergence of a new line of leaders.

Sources close to Mr. Basu told newsmen that he has been encouraging the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leaders in Delhi and Calcutta to look at a scenario where his departure from politics would be a reality. Mr. Basu and senior CPI(M) leaders held talks on the issue over the past few months.

Inquiries by the newspaper reveal that Mr. Basu has indicated in close circles that he would like to be relieved of his administrative and organisational burden as soon as possible, preferably before the 1996 Assembly poll.

Mr. Basu's friends and relatives are believed to have been trying to persuade him to opt out of politics for quite some time. Their concerns are mainly on account of his advanced age and growing attacks on him.

Predictably, the CPI(M), whose current weightage in national politics is directly related to the party's dominance in West Bengal, has for now shot down Mr. Basu's proposal. In its perception, Mr. Basu's services are still required, even though he is in his Eighties, because he is one of the few assets going for the party.

Former Army Chief Admits Illicit Receipt of $4.6 Million

Former chief of Pakistan's Army Staff, Gen. Mirza Aslam Baig, has admitted receiving $4.6 million from a key figure in a banking scandal. He alleged that part of the money was used to topple Benazir Bhutto's government and to fund Nawaz Sharif's election in 1990.

Baig in a sensational statement recently, also claimed that $2.6 million from the $4.6 million received from Yunus Habib, the central figure in the scandal involving the Mehran Bank, was deposited as special funds for the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan.

Baig, who came under severe criticism from the National Assembly members, said he had not taken a 'single penny from the donation.' He said he had provided the details of this transaction to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and then Chief of Army Staff Gen. Asif Nawaz.

He said part of the amount was used for acquisition of election intelligence in 1990 and said such donations had been received earlier also from within and outside the country and placed at the disposal of the ISI for such purposes.

Meanwhile, bitten by a raging financial scandal, members of Pakistan's National Assembly agreed to probe into their assets and family background.

Both the government and opposition members unanimously approved the appointment of a Parliamentary Probe Committee during a debate on the damaging disclosures made by detained banker, Yunus Habib.

Political analysts said the rare show of unanimity of the otherwise bitter adversaries appeared to be directed at the military, which was suspected of being behind the disclosures as well as a beneficiary of Habib's fraudulent favours.

Habib is alleged to have used his banks to bankroll politicians, rig the 1990 general elections and siphon off more than $150 million to himself and powerful friends.

Federal Minister for Special Education Sher Afghan, who proposed the parliamentary probe, said the reality was even worse. Angry over the battering of politicians, many M.P.s demanded that other wielders of power being named in the scandal should also be taken to task.

Sen. Malik Qasim, who heads a parliamentary committee against corruption, admitted that corruption is more extensive than anti-corruption and suggested that the armed forces should form internal morality committees to clear their names.

A New Party in Punjab

The formation of a new political party, known as the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar), was announced inside the Golden Temple complex here on May 1.

The party, which has been formed under the directions of the Akal Takht, has demanded an 'independent sovereign Sikh homeland.'

It has been formed after the merger of various Dal factions like the Akali Dal (Panthic), the Kabul Dal, the Mann Dal, the Babbar Akali Dal, the Manjit faction and the Talwandi Dal.

Surjit Singh Barnala, a former Punjab Chief Minister who announced the formation of the new party, said the affairs of the party will be run by a six-member committee.

According to the 'historic Amritsar declaration,' dated May one, 1994, the party demanded the formation of an independent Sikh homeland for the Sikhs wherein the community would be free to profess and propagate Sikhism without any interference from any quarter. The declaration said this demand was nothing new but only reiterated the promises made to the Sikh leaders by the government of India during the India-Pakistan partition.

The declaration said: 'the Indian leaders had promised to the then Akali leaders an independent Sikh state, but this was never given and the Sikh community was betrayed. If the Indian government does not concede the demand, the Akali Dal (Amritsar) would launch a struggle for its acceptance, it said.'

Top Kashmiri Militants Held

JAMMU, April 23.

The Jammu and Kashmir militants suffered a severe setback today, when Army search parties, in a morning swoop, apprehended 13 of their top-ranking men.

According to an Army spokesman, Syed Ahmed Beg, self-styled commander-in-Chief of the pro-Pakistan outfit, Al Jehad and his deputy, self-styled commander-in-chief, Mohammad Ayub Lalu alias Biju Ustad, along with their three bodyguards, all residents of Anantnag district were apprehended from their hide-outs in the outskirts of Anantnag town early this morning.

Two others, claiming to be district and tehsil commanders of another pro-Pakistani outfit, Hizbul Mujahideen, were arrested in Waripora area of Badgam district. Another district commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen was apprehended from Sangrama area of the district. Their names could not be ascertained, as they gave fictitious ones.

Three more area commanders of the Hizbul Mujahideen were apprehended by an Army raiding party from their hideout in Doda district of Jammu region. They were

responsible for abducting 11 persons gunning them down one after another in Doda, Bhaderwah and Kishtiwar towns of the district.

Two other 'area commanders' of the Allah Tigers were apprehended by Army authorities in Kargil area of the border district of Ladakh early this morning.

Protesters Demand Elections in Bangladesh

Two people were shot dead and nearly 50 injured, many by gunshots, when some 15,000 opposition activists marched to the government secretariat in Dhaka in defiance of a ban.

A shootout started between young militants from the Awami League, Bangladesh's main opposition party, and unidentified gunmen who burst onto the street while hundreds of riot police stood around.

'We did not fire a single shot but two people were gunned down,' said one police officer at Kaptan Bazar, the scene of the shooting not far from the secretariat.

Hospitals said some 50 injured were brought in, 21 with bullet wounds, as a battle between police and protesters raged. 'It has been a hell of a bloody affair,' said one doctor at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

One of the injured, Mohammad Zakir, alleged that he was attacked by pro-government activists.

Earlier police fired at least 100 tear gas shells outside the office of the Awami League which organized the protest around the secretariat, witnesses said.

Protesters hurled dozens of home-made bombs in a running battle with police. One young man had his leg blown off.

The protest and a separate one near the Election Commission building were organized by the League and the opposition Jatiya Party to try to force the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to hold early elections.

The next general election is not due until March 1996.

The government last week imposed a 24-hour ban on rallies and processions in the capital and deployed some 3,000 riot police and paramilitary soldiers around the city.

The protest around the Election Commission building which the Jatiya Party of ousted President Hossain Mohammad Ershad was staging, was relatively peaceful, police and witnesses said.

They said some 10,000 people gathered near the building complaining that the commission was not neutral in recent polls.

Police stopped most of the marchers a short distance from the secretariat and the commission but some managed to push forward.

Government employees were asked to arrive at their offices at sunrise and tight security was in force for ministers.

The protesters called for Khaleda to quit, saying she had failed to control corruption and guarantee basic rights.

Protest by Kashmiri Groups

Kashmiri groups in London recently held demonstrations for two days against a Pakistani team of legislators that came to Britain to win support for the country's position on Kashmir.

A group of pro-independence Kashmiris protested outside the Pakistani consulate in Bradford, where the team members met supporters.

Earlier, a meeting that the team addressed in Birmingham was held up for two hours. Groups demanding independence for Kashmir wanted a flag of Kashmir raised alongside the Pakistani flag, and their demand was finally granted.

The Kashmiris were led by groups from the Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front, parent body of the J & K Liberation Front, and by the J & K National People's Party.

The team of four – members of the National Assembly – were led by Nasrullah Khan of the Pakistan Democratic Party. They were on a tour to campaign for a plebisicite in J & K following Pakistan's diplomatic setback at the United Nations Human Rights Conference in Geneva last month.

They were scheduled to go to Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Sweden and Turkey.

In Britain, they met with Mark Lennox-Boyd, minister in charge of South Asia in the Foreign Office. A request for a meeting with Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd was said to have been denied.

The four also met with Members of Parliament, including Gary Waller, John Watts and Harry Greenway of the Conservative Pary, and Labourites Max Madden and Roger Godsiff.

The Pakistanis, who called themselves the Parliamentary Kashmir Committee of the Pakistan Government, reportedly asked for British intervention in Kashmir on the ground that the problem was a British legacy, but the request was rejected.

Lennox-Boyd was said to have told them that it was a problem for India and Pakistan to sort out under the 1972 Shimla agreement.

MPs Protest Against Namada Dam

NEW DELHI (UNI) – Several opposition Members of Parliament are among a range of prominent people who have appealed to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to intervene and stop construction of the Narmada Dam. They submitted a signed memorandum to him last week.

The protest movement against the Narmada Dam project entered its final stage on April 19 when hundreds of tribals from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh launched an indefinite demonstration in New Delhi, demanding Rao's intervention.

Protest leader Medha Patkar told reporters that their cause had reached a crucial stage and there was no question of turning back now. The movement activists have sent a detailed memorandum to Rao and Environment Minister Kamal Nath.

Patkar warned the government that if it failed to concede their demands members of a suicide squad would lay down their lives in the dam catchment area when it is submerged during the coming monsoon.

On the second day of the protest, a signed memorandum was passed to the Prime Minister which warned that if the dam work went ahead it would 'bring shame on Indian society.'

Signatories included: Geeta Mukherjee, MP; Brahmanand Mondal, MP; Shanta Ram Potdukhe, former central finance minister of state (Congress); Rabi Ray, ex-Speaker of the Lok Sabha (Janata) and Raja Ram, general secretary of the Indian People's Front.

The launching of the Delhi protest coincided with a 'warning day' observed by people from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh who have been ordered to resettle.

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In their memorandum to the Prime Minister, the protest leaders said that the three state governments had chosen to go ahead with the construction of the project without waiting for the findings of the officially-appointed study group.

The protest leaders said that reports by the ministers of environment and forest and social welfare had concluded that conditions for rehabilitation of the dam oustees had been violated.

They also claimed that the Supreme Court had ordered the catchment area should not be submerged before a clear six months had passed to ensure proper rehabilitation of all those ousted from the dam area.

Rights of Mohajirs Abused

A member of the Pakistani Senate has brought to the notice of British MPs reported human rights abuses against Mohajirs in Pakistan.

The Senator, Nasreen Jalil, said at a meeting in the House of Commons on April 19 that about 25 million Mohajirs in Pakistan had been 'reduced to second-class citizens in their own country and they are subjected to the worst kind of atrocities and violations of human rights.'

The meeting chaired by Bob Parry, Labour MP from Liverpool, was organized by the Afro Asian Solidarity Group, an independent think tank in London.

'The government of Pakistan always protests and raises its voice at the violation of human rights in Kashmir, Bosnia and other regions,' Jalil said at the meeting. 'But the violence and atrocities being perpetrated on Mohajirs and the extent of inhuman treatment being meted out by the Pakistan government to Mohajirs is a disgrace.'

A military operation is continuing against the Mohajirs, she said, declaring, 'Loss of lives, property and harassment of MQM workers, office bearers and even sympathizers has been extensive. Hundreds of MQM workers have been killed in cold blood; thousands have been injured and maimed.'

Mohajirs are a very large minority in Sindh but are being 'forcibly pushed out of administration, establishment and politics,' she said, and Mohajirs have become the 'victim of Pakistan People's Party parochial policies, revealing PPP as a Sindhi nationalist party.'

Giving details of discrimination, Jalil said Karachi, most of whose population consists of Mohajirs, contributes more than three-quarters of its income to the national treasurer but less than 1 percent is spent on the urban population. The urban areas contribute 90 percent of the income of Sindh but less than 5 percent of the money is spent on urban areas, she said.

The Benazir Bhutto government has taken several measures against Mohajirs, the senator said. For a population of 12 million in Karachi, there are only 598 seats in medical colleges. Of this, 40 percent has been reserved for students from other parts of Sindh, she said.

The government had created the new district of Malir, made up of scattered Sindhi-speaking pockets, she said, while the capital of Sindh is being moved from Karachi to Malir.

Chinese Jets for Pakistan

Pakistan signed an agreement with China on April 9 to buy six K-8 training jets for its air force to replace U.S.-made T-37 trainers.

The aircraft, developed jointly by China's Nanchang Aircraft Manufacturing Company and the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, can be used for both basic and advanced training.

The K-8 costs $3 million for a similar American plane, said Lin Gumin, president of the China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation.

It is China's first overseas sale of the aircraft. Lin said China hoped to sell 300 to 500 of the planes over the next few years, adding that the K-8 cost a quarter of the price of equivalent planes currently available elsewhere.

'It is not a purchase contract, in fact it is the first step towards the culmination of a joint venture that we started in 1986 with our time-tested friends across the Karakoram mountain range,' Defence Production Secretary Mazhar Rafi said after the signing ceremony.

Pakistan already manufactures some parts for the K-8 and plans to produce 25 percent by the end of this year and to raise that to 45 percent in the next two years.

Islamabad may replace its FT-5 advanced trainers with the K-8, Rafi said. 'We are hopeful that K-8 aircraft will be sold in the international market because of its competitive price,' Lin told reporters.

Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Algeria have expressed interest in buying the K-8, and negotiations are under way, Lin said.

No Terrorism Against Friends

ISLAMABAD – Pakistan's National Assembly passed a bill on April 28 making acts of terrorism against the governments of friendly countries a criminal offense.

'Such activities create misapprehensions and affect our relations with friendly countries,' Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar was quoted by the official APP news agency as having told the house.

He did not cite examples, but his comments appeared to refer to complaints by several Arab states that their Muslim militant nationals planned operations against them while in Pakistan.

Babar said the bill amended two sections of the penal code to provide punishment for 'destabilizing the governments of friendly countries.'

Thousands of Arabs came to Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province to help the mujahideen guerrillas in Afghanistan in their 14-year civil war against the Soviet-backed government which fell in Kabul in 1992.

Pakistan has been under pressure from Arab states, particularly Algeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to expel the militants. Since early last year, it has told Arabs staying in the country without valid papers to leave or face arrest.

Government officials say the policy is not to allow Pakistani territory to become a haven for extremists wishing to operate against other countries.

The new bill must be passed also by the Senate (upper house) to become law.

Pakistan's existing laws did not define terrorist activities aimed at destabilising friendly countries as a criminal offense.

Doubts Over Indo-Bangla Treaty

DHAKA – The renewal of the Indo-Bangla Friendship Treaty signed after Bangladesh's liberation in 1971 is facing an uncertain future with the ruling party parrying the issue and the opposition against it.

Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mostafizur Rahman refused to make any direct comment on the ruling Bangladesh

Nationalist Party's position regarding the renewal of the treaty which will expire on March 18, 1996.

'We still have time. We will think over it (renewal),' Rahman told journalists who pressed him for comments during a briefing on the recent remarks of Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, chief of the opposition Awami League, regarding the renewal question. Asked if the 25-year-old treaty was still operative, he said 'no comment'.

Late last month Hasina told a group of journalists from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries that, if returned to power, the Awami League would not renew the treaty which was signed on March 19, 1972, by her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Hasina said there had been a lot of changes in global politics and after the establishment of SAARC and the signing of the SAPTA Accord, 'the Awami League does not feel it necessary to renew the treaty.'

The same opinion was expressed by A.M.S. Kibria, member of the Advisory Council of the Awami League and former foreign secretary and Abul Hassan the Party's international affairs secretary.

'We have always felt the treaty has served its purpose very well. The initial dangers and threats to the security of the newly independent state, from both internal and external sources, are no longer there. Under the changed international and regional situation, we feel that the renewal of the treaty is not necessary,' they said.

The signing of the treaty irked the right-wing and fundamentalist forces in Bangladesh who still brand the Awami League as an Indian stooge. Observers here feel the party had to pay dearly for signing the treaty as it has faced electoral debacles due to an adverse campaign against it.

Hasina refuted the allegations that it was 'a treaty of slavery.' She said questions were raised in Parliament time and again on the treaty, but all the foreign ministers under slain president Ziaur Rahman, deposed President Gen. Hussain Muhammad Ershad and present Prime Minister Khaleda Zia admitted in Parliament that it was a friendship treaty.

Since the five-year-term of the BNP government ends on Feb. 29 and the friendship treaty expires on March 18, 1996, it has to take a clear stand on the treaty because it could become a major election issue.

Aid Package for Kashmir

The government of India has alloted Rs. 2 billion ($65 million) to help restore the economy and infrastructure of Jammu and Kashmir, which is entering its fifth summer of militancy.

Official sources said the funds would be used to repair damaged bridges, rebuild primary schools and restore health centres in the valley and elsewhere in the state.

The package was recommended by a team of experts from the Prime Minister's office, headed by K.R. Venugopal, who visited the state to assess the damage wreaked by terrorism.

Officials had assured the state administration that funds were no problem in the ultimate aim of restoring normalcy.

The main thrust of the funding will be on rural development, for which Rs. 1.2 billion ($40 million) is earmarked, and a substantial amount has been allotted for restoring the primary health-care structure.

About 400 schools have been damaged in terrorist attacks, of which the centre will finance the rebuilding of 163 primary schools, providing jobs as well.

In the village industries sector, the state will get a subsidy of Rs. 10 million, which is expected to create 10,000 jobs in an effort to wean youths from militancy.

The Centre has also agreed to build two slaughterhouses in the valley and another in the Jammu region.

The team has sanctioned establishing five village-level, food-processing training centres for canning and fruit juice.

On health care, it favours setting up a cobalt unit in Srinagar and replacing damaged hospital equipment quickly.

China to Recognise Sikkim's Accession to India

Nineteen years after Sikkim became India's 22nd state, the Chinese have indicated that they are ready to change their previous position of opposition to the merger.

Chang Ruisheng, the Chinese Ambassador in India, said on April 20 in Calcutta that Beijing was considering official recognition of the 1975 merger of Sikkim with India.

In a news conference in Calcutta, Chang said that both India and China had agreed last year to maintain peace and tranquility along their borders. He said: 'We have already opened a trade route and are actively considering another traditional trade route via Kalimpong (in north-west Bengal bordering Sikkim).'

The recognition of Sikkim, a horseshoe shaped state which borders West Bengal in the south, would be a further step along the road to better Sino-Indian relations.

Beijing had challenged India's territorial rights over Sikkim ever since Indira Gandhi's 1975 decision to make the tiny Himalayan 'protectorate' a state in the republic. Despite its small size, Sikkim holds strategic significance as it has always been the gateway to Tibet. The merger allowed India to push forward its frontiers.

The Chinese historical claims over Sikkim date back to the end of the 16th century when the Tibetans began colonizing the state. The Tibetan Namgyal dynasty went on to rule Sikkim for three centuries. During this time many Nepalis also settled in Sikkim so that the native Lepchas became a minority. In fact in the Nepali language Sikkim means 'a new place.'

In a 1991 census of Sikkim, which at that time had a poulation of 405,505, Nepalis formed 70 percent of the people, while Lepchas and Tibetans made up most of the remainder. The Lepchas and Tibetans there are Buddhists, while the Nepalis are mainly Hindus.

Chinese sovereignty over Sikkim ended in 1861, when the British sent troops to the state and forced the ruler's son to sign a treaty accepting British rule. In 1888 the British pushed the Tibetan army out of Sikkim. In 1890 Sikkim's borders were defined and the Chinese rulers of Tibet recognized British control over the state.

After independence in 1947, India succeeded to the British rights in Sikkim. In 1949 Sikkim became a protectorate of India and then, under a 1950 agreement, Sikkim's defense, communications and foreign affairs became the responsibility of India.

Sikkim's rulers continued to hold *de facto* control of the state, which led to a long campaign for democracy by the peasantry. This culminated in a law adopted in 1973 which reduced the Sikkim ruler to a mere constitutional head.

But it was not until April 1975 that the people of Sikkim were able to participate fully in the mainstream of Indian politics. Although Beijing challenged the merger, the stance became more subdued after Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's Beijing trip last September contributed significantly to improving Sino-Indian relations.

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● Furore Over GATT

by T.N.Gopalan

The new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade might already have been signed at Marrakesh, and a new international trade regime may well be in the offing. One could almost hear international cartels smacking their lips, sharpening their knives and readying to go for the jugular of the developing countries, at least that is how the GATT critics would view the shape of things to come. And so it is going to be not all that easy for the governments concerned to make their respective citizens accept the GATT and all that goes with it.

Though there has not been much of a controversy, or even discussion on the Dunkel proposals – now enshrined in the new agreement – in the neighbouring countries, in India a furious debate has been raging over the entire gamut of the issues involved.

The ruling party stands almost isolated, with the entire opposition, cutting across party barriers, vehemently denouncing the treaty as anti-people and anti-Third World. The basic thrust of their charge is that the Narasimha Rao Government has unilaterally, arbitrarily, shamefully and needlessly surrendered the country's sovereignty at the altar of political expediency and that the touted gains of the treaty are more dubious or even imaginary than real.

Not having taken the Indian parliament into confidence before signing on the dotted line and ignored the suggestions of a parliamentary committee which went into the Dunkel proposals at length, the Rao Government is finding itself with its back to the wall in defending the treaty. Pandemonium is breaking out in both the houses of parliament repeatedly, and anti-Dunkel rallies are the order of the day in most parts of the country.

Unlike in any other country in this part of the world, the anti-West thrust, a strong distrust over the distaste for anything emanating from the Occident, a legacy of the militant freedom struggle led by a personality like Mahatma Gandhi, continues to have its own hold on the Indian psyche. No surprise then that the GATT-related issues have hogged the headlines in the media and dominated the political discourse here for the last couple of months or so.

The Opposition is charging that by subjecting itself to the new international regime, the government would be left with no authority to decide its own policies relating to subsidy, pricing of drugs and protection of seeds and that the food security system would go haywire with the public distribution system coming under the GATT discipline. More than most, fears here centre around the possible cut-down in subsidies now enjoyed by farmers, on fertilizers especially, and the adverse fall-out of patenting seeds.

While the government could only point to the fact that subsidies are enjoyed by farmers the world over and that no nation in the west could afford to cut down on the subsidies, thereby trying to assure the farming community that there would be no abolition of or reduction in the subsidies now made available to them, its attempts to explain away the possible ill-effects of seed-patenting do not seem to carry conviction with many. The Dunkel proposals will, in effect, prevent the farmers from bartering or selling the patented seeds used by them, a traditional right enjoyed by them from time immemorial. The measure looks all the more iniquitous in the light of the fact that the developed countries have taken away hundreds and thousands of germplasm varieties from countries like India at will, in order, of course, to develop high-yielding seeds. The developing world has never been paid for the germplasm thus taken away – which have helped on many occasions to fight all kinds of plant diseases in the West – and how fair is it to expect the farmers who had in fact developed those genes over the decades to now pay for the end-product, simply because the West has scaled commanding heights in science and technology. Again a ruthless exploitation of the third world resources had contributed in no small measure to the strides made by the West.

What is going to happen to the drug prices is another area of concern. By agreeing to switch from process patenting to product patenting, the government seems to have paved the way for the tripling or even quadrupling of a variety of drugs.

(Confining the patenting to the process of manufacture [of a drug] has enabled local manufacturers to produce the same product through a different route on their own, without having to pay any royalty to the original inventors).

Even otherwise the drug pricing policy is all skewed and gives a lot of leeway to the international companies to manipulate the drug prices to their advantage. Now in the changed situation the prices of a variety of drugs are bound to soar to very high levels.

This the government does concede reluctantly but defends itself by saying that not many drug varieties are covered by the patenting system and that anyway the government has the right to control the prices of life-saving medicines, if necessary. And one has this gem from Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee during a TV interview – if the prices go up too steeply for the Indian consumer, inevitably there will be consumer resistance, and the manufacturer would, in turn, be forced to reduce the prices to acceptable levels!

The pro-GATT lobby, though not so convincing or vocal or popular, still uses the media in a big way to put across its viewpoints. While the centre is administering a heavy dosage of its GATT propaganda through the controlled electronic media, the print media too is by and large dismissive of the Dunkel critics as either being woolly-eyed or even atavistic. The global trade is going to zoom up by leaps and bounds, and India too, what with its recent liberalisation measures, is sure to carve out a share for itself in the boom. There could be some hiccups in the process, but there is no way we can remain isolated in this unipolar world of ours, the pundits seem to say.

Now it is difficult to either dismiss the opposition's aprehensions as motivated and unfounded or to view the entire episode as a 'Gattastrophe' or that nation-governments would stand reduced to the level of 'glorious municipalities'.

It could perhaps be right to say that binding multilateral treaties which open up new and expanded trade avenues are much more reliable for achieving a larger presence in global markets than the alternative of hundreds of bilateral compacts which might involve consid-

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erations other than economic factors.

The very fact that a mighty country like China, with all its newfound economic might, is still desperately knocking at the doors of the GATT does go to show which way the wind is blowing.

But then the question is whether the Narasimha Rao Government is acting in good faith or is it merely knuckling under pressure without a thought for the interests of its own people?

After all for three years since the Uruguay round of talks kicked off in 1986 India had to put up a stiff fight on issues like intellectual property rights and the entry of multinationals into the services sector and been a rallying point for the other developing countries. Even after the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, India could have stood up for its rights and sought to extract some major concessions from the West for the ground it was conceding in patent issues and the like.

But see what has happened. One of the much touted gains of the new treaty for the developing countries is the almost totally unrestricted flow of textile goods to the West, flowing from the phased dismantling of the multi-fibre arrangement which prescribes quotas for the exporting countries. The US and its allies have bluntly refused to shorten this phase by five years as demanded by the developing world. The ten year limit still holds.

Meanwhile the US has raised some new issues like the labour standards, meaning the wage levels and working conditions.

Feeling increasingly threatened by possible massive imports of cheap manufactured goods from the developing world, the US and its allies are now demanding that the former be compelled to adopt minimum labour standards. From here to discussion of other social and civil issues like human rights is not a long step. Ultimately the West could raise a new series of trade barriers offsetting whatever gains that could be accruing from the new GATT. So then even before the MFA is dismantled new barriers could be in place.

Naturally the developing world is furious. The G-15 summit which met recently in New Delhi – it was actually a six-nation summit – urged its trading partners 'to refrain from actions which would have the effect of unravelling the carefully negotiated balance of rights, obligations and interests of parties in the Final Act, thus jeopardising the global system.' And there have been more forthright reactions outside the summit deliberations too.

Mr. Pranab Mukherjee himself, while addressing the plenary of the Marrakesh ministerial meeting, declared that while labour standards were a matter of importance, India could not brook attempts to force linkages (between trade and labour conditions).

He also pointed out that the wider issue of the impact of immigration policies on the trading system was yet to be grappled with by the world community.

India, with a huge trained scientific manpower at its disposal, is hoping against hope that in the new scheme of things a significant percentage of this segment could find its way to the developed world, the current restrictions on immigration simply crumbling in the face of the new forces unleashed at Marrakesh. But the West is not moving an inch in this sphere, and the developing world is disappointed and frustrated.

If the developing countries could put up a fight now over such issues, could it not have done so in other equally important matters too?

The developed world, especially the US, is unabashedly promoting its own business interests in the garb of a new and more rational order. It has always done so anyway, and it is for the rest to ensure that they are not forced to sacrifice their own respective national interests in the process.

As Mr. Madhu Limaye, the veteran socialist, has commented, it is indeed a cruel world and India's options are limited. But it is the brave and the clever who will inherit this new world, and not the meek.

Massive Rights Abuses in Pakistan

Human rights are trampled upon on a massive scale in Pakistan, according to domestic and international rights groups, despite Islamabad's unending concern for civil liberties in Kashmir.

Human rights abuses are rampant and widespread, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said in a report, with the worst sufferers being women, children and minorities.

Law enforcement agencies routinely and brazenly torture suspects and rape women prisoners in jails, carry out extrajudicial murders that are dismissed as deaths in encounters, and are responsible for growing disappearances in Pakistan, it declared.

It may seem pretty hard to disagree with the assertions that the human rights situation in Pakistan is not as bad as it was before, the *Muslim* newspaper of Islamabad said in an editorial. But it is equally if not more difficult to disagree with the HRCP that the violations of human rights continue in (Pakistan), the influential daily added.

Statistics compiled by human rights groups in Pakistan reveal a grim picture:

In 1993, for example, at least 52 people died in the custody of police or other security agencies, and 183 people (incuding some policemen) died in so-called encounters.

A woman was raped every three hours in Pakistan, and every fourth raped woman was gang raped. The fact that Pakistan's prime minister is a woman does not seem to have helped the situation improve.

The *Muslim* said that in an increasing number of cases, influential people were involved on the crime side.

A commentary in the *Frontier Post* newspaper added that the Pakistani state, instead of putting an end to the growing rights violations, had chosen the wrong side. It said the state had not only provided a legal cover to human rights violations but, in many instances, those entrusted with the protection of the populace were actively involved in its victimization.

The U.S. State Department, in its annual report to Congress in February, came down heavily on the abuses in Pakistan, reserving its harshest criticism for the status of women under detention. The 36-page report quoted government figures to say that 660 people have died in Pakistani jails in the last five years.

There were also monitors concerning prisoners' deaths while in police custody, including reports of instances in which prisoners alleged to have been killed in shootouts probably died as a result of police torture, the report said. It said torture was routinely

practiced in Pakistan. Police and jailers use force to elicit confessions and compel persons under detention to incriminate others, it asserted.

The forms of torture include beating, whipping the soles of the feet with rubber whips and sexual assault, the American report said. When deaths result, suicide or natural causes are the commonly offered explanation, it said. It said Pakistan, which has not ratified 17 of the 25 United Nations human rights conventions, had made no significant effort to reform the police or judicial systems or to prosecute and punish those responsible for abuses. As a result, the report said arbitrary detention, arrest, torture and other abuse of prisoners and detainees continued to be a serious problem.

The report said women prisoners were reportedly coerced by police officers to trade sexual favours for their release, while other women were simply raped. Government efforts to bring an end to sexual abuse by the police have had little effect, it said, while police accused of abuse are seldom tried or punished.

The London-based Amnesty International made similar charges in a report released in December. Torture, including rape, in the custody of police, para-military and armed forces is endemic in Pakistan, often leading to death, it said. Extrajudicial executions by, or with the approval of, the authorities are rife, and some prisoners have disappeared in custody. Members of these (security) forces have been allowed to torture and kill with impunity, it added.

Amnesty said torture was used by the police in Pakistan to obtain confessions, punish, humiliate, intimidate and terrorize, and added that the majority of those held in police or military custody were exposed to some form of torture or ill-treatment.

It said it had spoken to dozens of victims who had been blindfolded, beaten with sticks and leather truncheons, kicked with heavy boots, had their legs pulled apart painfully, their genitals beaten or damaged by heavy metal or wooden rollers, burned with cigarettes or given electric shocks.

Many victims say they were hung upside down, a summary of the Amnesty report said. Others have been stripped and dragged naked through the streets by jeep. Yet others have been deprived of food and sleep for long periods or subjected to mock execution. Female prisoners frequently have been raped, and then threatened with criminal charges if they reported the rape.

Amnesty said the Pakistani government itself was not to blame. Some political parties also tortured political opponents as well as dissidents within their own party, it said.

The London-based group said disappearances were a grave problem in Pakistan. It added that there had been instances when police killed prisoners to hide the evidence of torture.

Army personnel are also known to have sided with rural landlords and to have killed defenceless villagers on their behalf.

Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's party, which took power in October, had promised during the election campaign to ban torture and enforce international standards of human rights.

Amnesty, however, said, 'Such promises are perpetually made by parties before elections. . .and then nothing happens. We hope the new government did not just make these promises to gain votes, but has real intentions to combat Pakistan's poor human rights record.

(Courtesy of *India Abroad*).

BJP Put in a Fix Over 'Use of Religion'

The Bharatiya Janata Party is worried about the legal and political impact of the unseating of its Member of Parliament from Thane in Maharashtra, Mr. Ram Kapse, through a verdict of the Bombay High Court, but would prefer to remain silent and see what happens to the appeal it plans to file in Supreme Court.

The Bombay High Court on 15 April set aside the election of the BJP's Prof. Ram Kapse to the Lok Sabha from the Thane constituency in the 1991 elections, holding him guilty of offences under Section 123, sub-sections (3) and (3-a) of the Representation of the People Act.

Giving his ruling on an election petition filed by Mr. Harbans Singh of the Congress(I), Mr. Justice A.C. Agrawal said: 'If one wanted to enter Parliament, one must abide by the provisions of Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act.'

The Judge held that Sadhvi Ritambhra – who had appealed to voters at an election rally on May 21, 1991, to vote for Prof. Kapse in the name of Hindu religion – had also committed an election offence under Section 123(3) of the Act. He observed that what was said by the Sadhvi was with the consent of Prof. Kapse.

Mr. Justice Agarwal negatived the pleas of Prof. Kapse, Sadhvi Ritambhra and Mr. Pramod Mahajan that material facts and particulars had not been mentioned in the petition and in the show cause notice issued to them.

Although a few Shiv Sena MLAs have earlier lost their seats in the Maharashtra Assembly as a result of court verdicts, this is the first time an MP has been found guilty of corrupt practice of using religion to raise his vote count, for violation of section 123 of the Representation of the People Act.

Senior party leaders are especially worried as this case is being seen in the context of the Supreme Court verdict by a nine-judge bench on March 11 upholding the dismissal of the erstwhile BJP Governments following the events in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.

The Apex Court had categorically said that 'religion and politics cannot be mixed' and that 'any State Government which pursues unsecular policies or unsecular course of action, acts contrary to the constitutional mandate and renders itself amenable to action under Article 356.' In other words, unsecular acts by a State Government would make it liable to be dismissed.

These judicial verdicts have come in quick succession and the party is concerned enough to have constituted a 20-member group consisting of its prominent members, who have a legal background, to study in detail the Supreme Court judgment in the case of dismissing State Governments.

In fact it is believed that one of the reasons for the attempt by the party leaders to broaden its definition of Hindutva to include the minorities, to speak a little less aggressively on the Ram temple issue, is the fear of the judiciary.

The recent reticence of the BJP on the Ayodhya issue and the aggressiveness of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on the same issue is part of the RSS policy to keep BJP on the right side of the law on this issue, while allowing the VHP and the 'sants' to talk about the religious issue.

Did not the BJP's assertion that the Ram temple must be built at the very site where the disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid stood amount to contempt of court since the matter was *sub judice*? To this the spokesper-

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TAMIL NADU

Gopalasamy Steals a March Over DMK

by T.N. Gopalan

By successfully arranging a massive rally in Madras on April 17, the DMK's rebel leader V. Gopalasamy (Vai.Go), has established his credibility as a mass leader beyond doubt.

It is not as if organising huge rallies in the city is some kind of a passport to Fort St. George, the seat of government in the State of Tamil Nadu. Far from it. Even if the number of rallyists runs to several lakhs, it would still constitute a microscopic minority of the total electorate. And financial inducements play an important part in mobilising volunteers for rallies. Having said that, it must be admitted that the turn-out in rallies does, in a way, reflect the mass-base of the sponsor.

It is in such a context one can say with confidence that Vai.Go has now emerged as a leader of considerable importance in the State. There were quite a few impressive things about the rally; first and foremost the sheer number of the participants – difficult to hazard a guess, but should be in the region of 15 to 20 lakhs, it is felt. It took nearly 10 hours for the entire rally to wend its way from one end of the city to the marina, traversing a distance of nearly 10 km. Mr. Gopalasamy and other senior leaders reviewed the parade from a specially erected dais. It was almost 5am the next day (April 18) when he took the floor. The audience, drawn from all over the state, dispersed only after Mr. Gopalasamy completed his speech, around 6am.

Secondly the composition – an overwhelming majority of the rallyists were very young, some would even say too young to be electorally useful for Vai.Go! That the youth should plump for the 'dissident leader' in such a big way should send jitters in the Karunanidhi camp, if not in Ms. Jayalalitha's.

Thirdly, in a clever attempt to carry the middle classes and the media with him, the Vai.Go group steered clear of any overt support to the LTTE, whether in the speeches made or slogans raised or in the placards and floats carried in the procession. And, as if to repudiate the propaganda that he was going soft on Ms. Jayalalitha since the latter was financing his efforts in a big way, Mr. Gopalasamy declared unequivocally that removal of her government was his first priority. 'Our enemy is the AIADMK government that is destroying the State. The Chief Minister has no moral right to continue in office,' he said.

In his hour-long speech he did not raise the Lankan issue even once. (But it did not prevent the likes of Dr. Subramaniam Swamy from charging that the Tigers were not only funding the Vai.Go group, but had actually sent across a number of its cadres to be at hand for organising the rally and, perhaps even in the campaign for the Assembly by-elections to follow.)

Finally he was able to cock a snook at both the judiciary and the official DMK by making his cadres carry the red-black flag of the parent body in a blatant defiance of the interim injunction of the High Court. On a petition from DMK general secretary K. Anbazhagan, the Court had restrained the Vai.Go faction from either using the name DMK or its flag. Arguing that the injunction related only to the official flag with its prescribed length and breadth, Vai.Go made some alterations in the measurements and had the flag of altered proportions carried at the rally. Of course he did not say that he represented the DMK, but he said that he was carrying on the legacy of Mr. C.N. Annadurai, the founder of the DMK.

Though Mr. Karunanidhi and others with him had made some threatening noises, that there would be violent clashes if the rallyists carried the party flag, nothing much happened. Perhaps they found it wise to keep away from trouble. But 'retribution' was not long in coming for the dissidents. Mr. R. Ezhumalai, a head of the Madras district unit, was hacked to death by some unidentified elements. The needle of suspicion should point to Mr. Karunanidhi's followers, but the latter has hotly denied the charge.

Some DMK-men are trying to console themselves by harking back to another rally they had taken out in the city only a couple of months ago and surely larger in size. What they do not want to admit is that for a party formed hardly five months ago to come up with such an astonishing show as Vai.Go's is indeed a great achievement.

But then elections are the right crucible to decide issues. Two are due now – on May 26 in Mylapore and Perundurai Assembly constituencies.

AIADMK-Cong-I relationship: Meanwhile the relationship between the Cong-I and the AIADMK is steadily deteriorating, and this is bound to have its own impact on the outcome of the by-elections, perhaps even on holding them. If the Cong-I, jettisoned as it has been by the AIADMK and not having the gumption to strike an alliance with the DMK for various reasons, wants to forestall an encore of the Palani-Ranipet debacles, it could manoeuvre to have the current elections too postponed, say by six months at least in the first instance.

Ms. Jayalalitha herself is, confidence (or shall we say arrogance) personified – she has already announced her party's candidates for both the constituencies and is currently engaged in a fierce battle of words with the Centre. Never mind the more discerning among the middle classes are amused (some even annoyed) by her periodical hysterical outbursts, she herself is determined to make her point.

In the current budget session of the state legislative Assembly, she has variously accused the Centre of stage-managing high-way robberies to destabilise her government (!) and of getting the RAW (The Research and Analysis Wing, an intelligence agency) to maintain clandestine links with the Tigers, in order to

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son said that it would be contempt to say this once a court verdict was given. 'But till then we are free to express our views,' he added.

He felt that even though the Supreme Court was hearing the presidential reference on the Ayodhya case, any party would have to spell out clearly its stand on this issue. 'Any delay (in a decision) in such sensitive matters can create further complications.'

ensure a safe passage for Prime Minister Narasimha Rao during his visit to the United Kingdom recently. She had spoken of a RAW conspiracy last year too in connection with the escape of some accused in the Padmanabha murder case – of course she has not bothered to substantiate her allegations.

The Centre has confined itself to dismissing such accusations as 'not very responsible'. But the Cong-I legislature party has been kicking up a big row, but not to any great effect. The moment they raise or seek to raise any issue which could be considered reflecting on the Chief Minister, the Speaker springs to his feet, chides them for their 'unbecoming behaviour' and orders them to resume their seats, leaving them no option but to walk out.

The opposition in Tamil Nadu is finding it increasingly difficult to force discussions on matters found unpalatable by the ruling party. Many time-honoured conventions in this regard are presently at a discount. In a desperate move some Congress MLAS leaders have gone on an 'indefinite fast' to protest against the unfair rulings of the Speaker.

Interestingly just a day before she tilted at the Centre for a spate of robberies in the State, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister had blamed the Lankan Tamil refugees for all the problems on the law and order front. If only they were all repatriated, things could be much better, she felt and regretted that the Centre was not responding to her requests in this regard too very enthusiastically. Fortunately the villain in the scheme of things changed the very next day, and nothing much came of the damning of the refugee community.

Support for the refugees was not lacking nevertheless. In a statement issued to the Press subsequently, 50-odd intellectuals, lawyers, journalists, writers and Tamil scholars, including Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, noted writer Komal Swaminathan, Prof. Maa Nannan and poet Perunchithiranaar expressed their dismay over Ms. Jayalalitha's hostile attitude towards the Lankan Tamil refugees and noted the overwhelming number of the refugees, put up in various camps, found their movements subjected to all sorts of restrictions and there was no way they could indulge in any crimes. A majority of the 30,000 refugees living on their own were relatively men of means, and it was inconceivable they could take to crimes. A miniscule number, perhaps the drop-outs from the ranks of the militants were the ones involved in some crimes or other. But to damn the entire community for the actions of a few was extremely unfair, the statement pointed out and challenged the government to come out with precise statistics on the crime situation so that the actual extent of the involvement of the refugee youth in the crimes committed in the State would be made known to all. They also pleaded against any further repatriation till normalcy resumed in the island.

Only the previous week DMK President M. Karunanidhi had threatened to unleash a statewide all-party agitation if the State did not desist from harassing the refugees. He was speaking in a function got up to mark the 96th birth anniversary of Mr. Chelvanayakam. Indian Union Muslim League Leader Abdus Samad, United Communist Party of India's T. Pandian and representatives of the Cong-I and the Janata Party were among those who paid homage to the multifaceted personality of Mr. Chelvanayakam and raised their voices against the injustices meted out to the Lankan Tamil refugees.

Assembly Adopts Extension of LTTE Ban Resolution

MADRAS, April 20.

The Tamil Nadu Assembly today adopted a resolution urging the Centre to take all legal steps for extension of the ban on the LTTE beyond May 14 for a further period of two years.

The Chief Minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, who moved the resolution, came down heavily on the Centre for not taking any action so far on the State's repeated requests in this regard. Instead of taking the decision in the interest of national sovereignty, the Centre was passing the buck to Tamil Nadu, she said.

The resolution was passed by a majority, with the main Congress(I) Opposition boycotting the House while a group of four members of the party participated in the proceedings. The DMK-I member walked out of the House after some exchanges while the members belonging to the DMK-II and MGRADMK were not present. The CPI, the CPI(M), UCPI and RPI members endorsed the resolution.

Ms. Jayalalitha wondered why the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, had 'not uttered a syllable' on the LTTE ban when the militant group was throwing a challenge to the country's sovereignty and had assassinated Rajiv Gandhi not long ago.

On the contrary, the Home Minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, who often spoke 'a little too much' had declared during a recent visit to Madras that the State Government need write only a letter for extension of the ban. A resolution for this was unnecessary, he had said. However, four months had elapsed since Tamil Nadu wrote to the Centre seeking extension of the ban.

In response to queries from the Union Home Ministry on the State's request, details had been furnished three times during March-April. The IG of the Tamil Nadu Special Investigating Team. Mr. P.C. Pant, held discussions with the Home Ministry officials and presented enough details to prepare a Cabinet note. However, no progress had been achieved on the State's request for extension of the ban. Mr. Chavan was making comments as if he did not know about the letter written by the State to the Centre.

'There is apprehension whether the Centre is vacillating on the LTTE issue,' she said.

Mr. Chavan was also reported to have 'sermonised' that the State itself could ban the LTTE without asking the Centre to do it. The State had scrutinised all the available laws in-depth and concluded that there was no provision available to it to impose the ban. Even the section under the Criminal Law Amendment Act which defined 'unlawful assembly' was held invalid by the Supreme Court.

If Tamil Nadu enacted a new legislation to declare the LTTE as unlawful, it would have effect only within the State. The Tigers were well entrenched in Europe and America and the Central intelligence agencies knew this well as it was they who advised her against going abroad when she wanted to seek foreign industrial investment.

The Centre had also acknowledged the tentacles of the LTTE spreading to

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BOOK REVIEW

Pangs of Proximity – India and Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis

S.D. Muni Chairman, Centre for Central and S.E. Asia and South Pacific Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Reviewed by N.N. Jha, formerly India's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.

Lessons in handling Indo-Sri Lanka relations

Prof. S.D. Muni's book represents a very important contribution to the history of India-Sri Lanka relations in the crucial period 1983 to 1990. His book contains very little verbiage and concentrates on hard facts and analysis.

The author has very well highlightd former President J.R. Jayewardene's inability to comprehend the seriousness of the Tamil issue. The former President emphasised the role of opportunities in education, employment and exercise of language rights rather than address himself to the all important question of devolution of power. It is in fact quite likely that history may well be harsh on J.R.J. for having missed the golden opportunity to resolve the Tamil issue once and for all when he and his party were returned to power in 1977 with a 5/6th majority in Parliament. Strongly placed as he was he could have, at least, ensured that resettlement or colonisation schemes of Sinhalese in the Eastern Province were held in abeyance.

Generations

It may be a peculiarly South Asian – in this case Sinhalese – phenomenon that the elite can often entertain the most communal feeling towards another community. In the case of Sri 'Lanka it was perhaps more noticeable because of the small size of the country and, secondly, because nationalism in that country followed independence instead of preceding it. This fact, however, tends to ignore another very important proposition, namely, that the same elite finds it equally difficult to interact with the clergy and staunch members of its own faith, also. The late President Premadasa was a notable exception and enjoyed a greater understanding of Buddhist clergy as well as the Tamils generally as compared with his elitist predecessors and contemporaries. With the benefits of hindsight one can now see that, perhaps, a golden opportunity to resolve the Tamil problems in their country was lost when the Indian government sponsored proposal, known as Annexure C, was found eventually unacceptable, after much vacillation by J.R.J. Much bloodshed and considerable destruction of properties and human miseries could have been averted by a timely acceptance of Annexure C. Essentially speaking, it was a question of failure on the part of the President to use his massive majority to overcome certain traits of his complex personality and assert himself with the requisite degree of firmness in matters of vital national importance. He was to display a similar element of craftiness, later in 1987, when he sought the services of former High Commissioner Dixit to address his Cabinet members on the proposed India-Sri Lanka Agreement. By doing so he, on the one hand, gave the impression to the Government of India of extending his fullest cooperation to them and, at the same time, he sought to convey an impression of helplessness, and accepting the *fait accompli*, both to his government and people and also to the international community generally. Not for nothing do the Sri Lankans refer to him as the the '20th century fox.'

Prof. Muni's book also makes a very succinct analysis of the discussion at Thimpu and also describes the beginnings of the fissures in the government of India – LTTE relations from Thimpu itself. Regarding the all important Indian Air Force air-drop over Jaffna, on 4th June 1987, the author very rightly suggests that the Sri Lankan military were incapable of taking Jaffna and there is a faint hint of a suggestion regarding the unsuitability of the air-drop for this purpose. Quite correctly, once again, he blames intelligence failure for this.

One wishes, however, that the author had come out a little more openly regarding the ill-advised air-drop which, most importantly, has left a deep psychological scar in the Sinhalese mind which regrettably will take generations to heal. The author has himself stated that Sri Lanka was prepared to accommodate India's regional security interests and that he refers to Gamini Dissanayake's state-

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other States and militant outfits. When it was known that the Sri Lankan group had established a big network in the country, what was the mystery behind asking the State Government to impose the ban, she asked.

Asserting that the LTTE had been rooted out from Tamil Nadu despite the security threat to her, Ms. Jayalalitha said if the Centre failed to impose the nationwide ban what was the guarantee that the militants would not function from Pondicherry, Karaikal, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra coast besides other States.

The state was calling for the ban to safeguard the national interest. 'If the Centre fails to do it, the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country could be shattered by the militant group,' she warned.

● Centre Backs Ban

The Centre will extend its full support to the Tamil Nadu Government in combating the LTTE, the Union Minister of State for Internal Security, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, announced here on 24 April.

Talking to reporters, Mr. Pilot advised the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, not to worry about the Centre's backing for her efforts. 'She should act harshly against the LTTE without any hesitation and root it out from the Indian soil,' he said.

The Minister said he was making a categorical statement to clear doubts expressed in certain quarters that the Centre's stand against the LTTE was weak. 'The Centre is firm on supporting the efforts of the State Government in combating the LTTE which is trying to forge a nexus with other anti-national organisations like ULFA and the ISI besides Punjab militants.'

Mr. Pilot wanted the Tamil Nadu Government to show results in its battle against the LTTE instead of merely issuing statements. He recalled that after a meeting with Ms. Jayalalitha he had given weapons and additional paramilitary forces to fight the Tigers. 'I am waiting for the day when the Government issues a statement that the LTTE has been wiped out from India,' he said.

ment in New Delhi to this effect. Moreover, these were made prior to the air-drop. Furthermore, it is now generally known that the Sri Lankan military was incapable of taking Jaffna, a fact also highlighted in the book. As a relief effort it was no more than a drop in the ocean.

But what the air-drop did achieve is to arouse Tamil expectations to a highly unrealistic level, something which was undesirable in the long run. Above all, the air-drop also had the twin impact of signifying India's impatience with Jayewardene's vacillations and, thereby, greatly expedited the subsequent turn of events which led to the signing of the India-Sri Lanka Agreement (ISLA also known as the Accord). This is not to suggest that Indian plans for the twin projects, namely relief expedition and air-drop were hastily conceived but the latter's manner of implementation gave the impression of pique at the manner in which a small power had rebuffed a major power. But the most pertinent observation was the one made by the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, A.C. Hameed, who said that by its intervention (air-drop etc) India had lost its credibility as a mediator but now had, instead, a moral obligation to solve the ethnic issue through having involved itself directly. This transformation was unfortunate because it sought to do what the Sinhalese had themselves failed to do in their country.

Realism

One can only agree with the author that the ISLA represented a sincere compromise. In fact one could go further and describe it as a historic document which represented the best possible achievement till then (and even now) on the vexed and seemingly intractable question of Sri Lanka's ethnic strife. It certainly drew a great deal of flak from various Sinhalese circles. It was partly due to a communication gap between intention and achievement, on the one hand, and appreciation and realisation, on the other. It came too soon on the heels of the highly traumatic (from the Sinhalese point of view) air-drop. The document itself, together with all the noble intentions, endeavours and labour expended since 1983 was subsumed in the immediate aftermath of the Agreement by the passions aroused by it. It was equally unfortunate that the letters exchanged between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene which effectively spelt out and sought to take care of India's geo-strategic concerns, though not a part of the ISLA, Got tagged on to the Agreement, largely due to the timing of its signatories and partly due to it being published, by the governments, in the same booklet as the ISLA. It almost conferred respectability on the LTTE's oft-repeated accusation that India was only interested in implementing its own strategic perceptions and was quite indifferent to the question of Tamil aspirations *per se*. The ISLA ought to have been preceded by a more organised propaganda barrage intended to soften up groups and individuals who could be expected to oppose it. Nothing like this was ever attempted. Addressing the Sri Lankan Cabinet was no substitute for the real thing in this region. In any case it was yet another classic instance of too little too late. Premadasa's opposition to the Agreement has intended to obfuscate the fact that known and sincere friends of India like Anura Bandaranaike, G.G. Ponnambalam and Gamani Jaysuriya also opposed it. The latter in fact resigned from the cabinet.

The book manages to convey to the reader the rather invidious position in which the IPKF found itself when it found its role reversed from 10th October, 1987 onwards. A lack of clear cut politico-military aim led to *ad hocism*, dithering and pure confusion. Were the LTTE by military means to be eliminated, pressured or prodded to come to the negotiating table? A tendency earlier to under-rate its military power and indulge in boasts of eliminating it in 72 hours did little to improve matters. The IPKF fought a unique war in Sri Lanka. It was not peace-keeping in the UN sense of the term but actual involvement in a neighbour's civil war in a sincere though hopeless attempt to douse the flames of war in a region uncomfortably close to our country.

Despite all this, in a purely military sense, the finest compliment that the IPKF command received is the oft-expressed sentiment among large sections of the Sri Lankan poulation to stay on in Sri Lanka for another year or so in order to complete the task of bringing the LTTE to its knees. A suggestion by our High Commission in 1992 that a suitable memorial be erected in honour of the 1165 IPKF soldiers killed in the cause of maintaining Sri Lankan unity met with widespread support among servicemen's organisations and the public generally.

Prof. Muni has made a general appraisal of possible future peacekeeping roles which obviously include the projecting of India's military capability in situations where it may become necessary to do so. Here India will have to make a distinction between weaker neighbours and not so weak neighbours. In the case of the former – which would obviously include Sri Lanka – the capability to undertake such a projection should be immanent but never imminent. The projection, or use of this power, should be reserved for countries like Pakistan who are simply unable to live as friendly neighbours. In the former category, the use of diplomacy will yield an infinitely more handsome dividend. The tendency, therefore, to judge all our neighbours by the same yardstick not only lacks a sense of realism but is highly counter-productive in addition.

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the propriety of the exercise of the prerogative of Presidential pardon.

Finally, we should like to stress that the prerogative of clemency is intended to be exercised in the most compelling circumstances and, quite clearly, not in a manner which is likely to erode public esteem for, and confidence in, procedures relating to the administration of justice. It seems to us self-evident that infringement of this principle is fraught with the gravest consequences for the tranquility of any democratic community based on respect for the Rule of Law.

We would recommend that the prerogative of pardon should in future be exercised on advice tendered by a body appointed by the Judicial Service Commission, so as to ensure that political influences, which are of course extraneous, have no bearing on the discharge of this function.

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make it unlikely that the 'truth' will ever be known.

In the interim, however, we can continue to explore the intriguing question at the heart of this piece – did Jesus, perhaps, live during the middle two decades of his life in INDIA? On a balance of historical probabilities, it is the writer's view that he did. A famous writer once remarked 'fact remains fact till someone questions its plausibility; it is the scholar's objective to establish the level of plausibility.'

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WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couple on their recent wedding.

Sujandran *son of Mr. Mylvaganam, Retired Operational Manager, SLTB and Mrs. Mylvaganam, 375 Kaolin Street, Broken Hill, NSW 2887, Australia and* **Rajani** *daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Rajasingam, 22 Hellensburg Close, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, UK On 15.5.94 at London Murugan Temple, Church Road, London E12.*

OBITUARIES

'. . . She is worth far more than Rubies. . .' Proverbs 31:10

Harriet Chellammah (Ranee) Sanders *passed into glory on 26 March 1994 in Melbourne Australia.*

Born on 5 March 1905, she was the youngest of six children of Rev. Charles Chelliah Handy (first national Principal of St. John's College, Jaffna) and Harriet Packiam Backus. Mrs. Ranee Sanders was the sister of Mrs. Annam Ariaratnam, Rev. John Truman Navaratnam, James Chellathurai, Alfred Mathuranayagam and Dr. George Rajanayagam Handy (only surviving brother). She was educated at CMS Girls College, Chundikuli and Raffles College, Singapore where she graduated with distinctions and completed her Senior Cambridge examinations with First Division in 1922. Upon graduation, she taught at Chundikuli Girls College and set up the popular Girl Guides' movement.

In 1926, Harriet Handy married David Selvamanickam Sanders who was later Vice-Principal of Jaffna College. Ranee Sanders organized the Young Women's Christian Association, lead the Jaffna College choir and was the church organist and pianist. Mr. and Mrs. Sanders raised and educated their five children : Pearl Selvaranee (Mrs. Kanagrajah, Melbourne), late Daniel Selvarajah (Prof. and Dean, University of Illinois), Rhea Chandraranee (Mrs. Ratnarajah, Melbourne), Samuel Chandrarajah (Consultant Physician, Scotland) and Handy Balarajah (Management Consultant Adelaide) at Jaffna College, Vaddukoddi. After Mr. D.S. Sanders retired in 1952, the family moved to the ancestral home of Ranee Sanders at Nallur. While at Nallur, Mr. and Mrs. Sanders welcomed and grand-parented their twelve grand-children.

Upon the death of her husband in 1980, Mrs. Sanders travelled to live with each of her children in Zambia, Scotland, Hawaii, Colombo and Zimbabwe. She migrated to Melbourne, Australia in 1987 and was naturalized in 1990. In the last three years of her life, Harriet Sanders was the proud great-grandmother of three.

She is greatly missed by all her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Saraswathy Vimalachandran, *beloved daughter of the late Mr. & Mrs. Kanagasabai (Atchuvely); wife of the late Kulasegaram Vimalachandran (Uduvil); loving mother of the late Alderman Chandrakumar, Skandarajah and Nirmala (UK); mother-in-law of Judy and Nallaratnam Rathindran; loving grandmother of Dale, Mark Vimalachandran, Rishmi and Nadine Rathindran; sister of Murugesu (Atchuvely), K.K. Pilai (Malaysia) and Mrs. Thuraiappa passed away peacefully on 6.4.94 and was cremated on 12.4.94. – 16 Northumberland Road, North Harrow, Middx., U.K. Tel: 081 427 7805.*

Laura Nesamalar Ponnuthurai, *wife of the late Mr. E.V. Ponnuthurai (Retired Agriculture Instructor); mother of Mahilmalar Tambiah, Kirupaimalar Rasiah, Sugunavathany Kanagasundaram, Karunakaran, Punithavathany Samuel and Chandravathana passed away in Jaffna on 12th May 1994. – 12 Tennyson Avenue, Rugby CV22 6JH.*

Pakiawathy (Bhagawathy), *wife of Mr. A. Sinnarajah (Retired Stores Superintendent, Kankesan Cement Factory, Formerly Royal Air Force, Katunayake); beloved daughter of the late Mr. V. Sangarapillai (Guaranteed Broker) and Mrs. Sangarapillai; loving mother of Wijayaindra (General Auto Works, Colombo 10) and Indirany; mother-in-law of J. Rajasooriyar (SLTB, Colombo) and Ahilandaiswary; grand mother of Vatsala, Ramesh and Janarthanan; sister of Mr. S.M. Rajasooriyar, Mrs. P. Ratnasabapathy, Mrs. P. Wijayasundaram, Mrs. Ganeshan and Mrs. Poongothai passed away on 9th April at her Chundikuli residence and funeral took place on 10th April 1994. – 32 Madangawatte Lane, Colombo 6.*

IN MEMORIAM

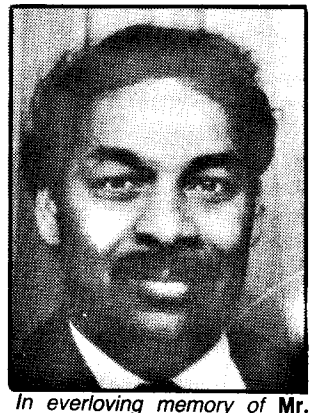
In loving memory of **Mr. B.P. Anthony Thambynayagam J.P. Retired AGA, Amparai,** *who passed away on 18.2.1993.*

Life is not measured by
the years,
But the happiness and love
you gave,
These are precious memories
for us to hold.
No words can truly comfort us,
When the one we love departs,
Days of sadness still loom
over us,
But memories of you,
will live forever.

Sadly missed by his wife **Mrs.** *Therese Thambynayagam; Mother-in-law Mrs. Annam Michael; Children Mrs. Joyce Ferdinand, Dr. Michael Thambynayagam, Mrs. Regina Canagasabey; Sons-in-law Mr. Hubert Ferdinand, Dr. Bala Canagasabey; Daughter-in-law Mrs. Agnes Thambynayagam and Grandchildren Sharon, Jonathan, Chrisanthan, Marian, Anthony, Marieta, and Jason.*

In everloving memory of **Mr. Kathiravelu Paramanathan,** *Businessman, Ward No. 1, Pungudutivu, Sri Lanka on the third anniversary of his passing away in Canada on 25.4.91.*

Sorrowfully remembered by his beloved wife Neelambal; children Chandrakumar (U.K.), Sooriyakumar (Canada), Vasuki (U.K.), Indrakumar, Jeyakumar, Nandakumar, Srikumar and Premini (all of Canada); son-in-law Balasubramaniam (U.K.), daughters-in-law Vasanthakala (U.K.), Louisa and Komathi (both of Canada); grandchildren Ryan, Ratheepan, Ravin, Jinesh, Rajeevan and Dilan – 6 Kumars, 285 High Street North, Manor Park, London E12 6SL. Tel: 081 471 5742.



In everloving memory of **Mr. Vythilingam Elampooranar (Elam)** *on the first anniversary of his passing away on 19.4.93.*

Sorrowfully remembered by his loving wife Puvanambikai; children Kalaiyarasan and Sangeetha; mother Mrs. Para-

vatham Vythilingam; brothers Elango and Elanchenny; sisters Elavarasy, Elanchelvy and Elanthevy – 57 Westmorland Road, North Harrow, Middx. HA1 4PL. Tel: 081 427 2726.

In loving memory of **Dr. Manohar Nadarajah,** *formerly of Katsina, Nigeria and later Bedford General Hospital, UK, on the second anniversary of his passing away on 29.5.92.*

You are always in our hearts and in our thoughts.

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by your wife Indranee and sons Suthaharan and Vaseeharan – 52 Marnham Crescent, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 9SW, U.K.

In loving memory of **Mr. Arunasalam Thampiah** *of Sayamboo Lane, Valanthalai, Karainagar; beloved husband of the late Sivagnanam; father of Maheswaran, Dr. Vamadevan (UK), Mrs. Panumathy Tharmalingam, Karunanithy (UK) and Sivathasan (UK); father-in-law of Vimaladevi, Dr. Nimaleswari (UK), Tharmalingam and Anushiya (UK); on the first anniversary of his passing away on 13th May 1993. – 113 Fitzroy AVenue, Harborne, Birmingham B17 8RG.*

In everloving memory of Dr. Parameswaran Kandiah *on the fourth anniversary of his passing away on 12.5.90.*

Sorrowfully remembered by his wife Pathmasany and loving children Thayalan and Pathanjali – 29 Mounstan Close, Hartside Grange, Hartlepool, TS26 OLR, U.K.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 22 *6.30pm* **Bharatha Natyam Recital** *by* **Thanuja Mohanan** *at Lilian Baylis Theatre, Sadlers' Wells, Roseberry Ave., London EC1. Tel: 071-837 4104/278 8916.*

May 28 *7.00pm* **London Tamil Arts Performing Society** *presents* **Annual Dance Festival** *at Waltham Forest Theatre, Lloyd Park, Winns Terrace, Walthamstow, London E17. Tel: 081-459 4335/470 7883.*

June 2 *Feast of Body and Blood of Christ.*

June 5 *Krishna Ekathasi.*

June 6 *Prathosam.*

June 8 *Amavasai.*

June 11 *Feast of Immaculate Heart of Mary.*

June 11 *to* **14 Vedanta Summer Retreat** *conducted by* **Swamy Parthasarathy** *at Whaley Hall, Reservoir Road, Stockport. Tel: 061-428 6389 (S. Shah).*

June 12 *1.00pm* **International Tamil Foundation Sixth Anniversary Lunch & Lecture** *by* **Adrian Wijemanne** *at Putney Leisure Centre, Upper Richmond Road, London SW15. Tel: 081-567 3227.*

June 13 *Chathurthi. Feast of St. Anthony of Padua.*

June 16 *to* **20** *6.30 – 8.00pm* **Lecture on Bhagavad Geetha Chapter IVB** *by* **Swami Parthasarathy** *at Hindu Centre 39 Grafton Terrace, London NW5 4JA. Tel: 081-427 6794 (Mr. Gopal Bhanot).*

June 19 *Ekathasi.*

June 21 *Prathosam.*

June 22 *Feast of Saints John Fisher & Thomas More.*

June 23 *Full Moon.*

June 24 *Feast of St. John the Baptist.*

June 26 *Chathurthi.*

June 29 *Feast of Saints Peter & Paul.*

June 30. *Feast of First Martyrs of Rome.*

Advance Information.

July 2 Jaffna College Alumni (UK) Association *holds* **Dinner & Dance** *at Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place (off Garrett Lane), Tooting, London SW17 0NE. Tel: 081-942 6643/599 8162.*

Sept. 10 SCOT *presents* **Bharatha Natya Recital** *by* **Mallika Sarabhai,** *Dancer & Actress (of Peter Brook's Mahabharatha fame) at Logan Hall, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL. Tel: 081-904 6472/9227.*

At Bhawan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071-381 3086/4608.

June 5 *6.30pm* **Hindustani Vocal** *by* **Amit Chaudhuri.**

June 11 *7.00pm &* **June 19** *6.30pm* **Karnatic Vocal** *by* **Sudha Raghunathan.**

June 12 *6.30pm* **Kathak** *by* **Pandit Vijai Shankar.**

June 4, 11 & 25 *5.30pm* **Gita Lectures** *by* **Sri Mathoor Krishnamurti.**

Dr. V. Krishnarajah – An Appreciation

With a deep sense of grief, many of us learnt the passing away of **Dr. Vellupillai Krishnarajah,** *lately Consultant Surgeon, Teaching Hospital, Jaffna. It has removed from us not only a surgeon par excellence but also an individual who personified the ultimate in human behaviour – dedication of his life to the alleviation of human misery and suffering of other fellow beings. He will be missed immensely, not only by his many friends, colleagues and trainees but also by the countless number of patients who benefited from his surgical skills that were dispensed with care and compassion throughout a career spanning over three decades.*

Having graduated from the Colombo Medical School in 1958, Krishna trained towards a surgical career culminating in his election to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1969. He spurned offers in the West and returned to his homeland with an intense desire to serve his community. Following periods of service in Kurunagale and Nuwara Eliya, where he was a popular and well sought after surgeon, Krishna's ambition was fulfilled with his appointment as Consultant Surgeon, General Hospital, Jaffna in 1979.

His appointment coincided with the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Jaffna and the elevation of the hospital to the status of a Teaching institution. The enormous contributions he made to the progress of these two premier medical institutions cannot be expressed in words. Many of us owe a deep sense of gratitude for his wisdom and friendship during the formative years of laying the foundation for medical education in Jaffna. He remained in Jaffna committed to his cause until the last years of his life. This despite the trials and tribulations of life in the peninsula. This inspite of the serious and progressive illness that afflicted him soon after assuming the position in Jaffna. He visited London a few times for medical treatment but in every instance returned willingly to his people. 'What is good for my patients is good enough for me' he would say, with the conviction of someone refusing to stray from his chosen path.

His enthusiasim to maintain the highest professional standards within the health service in the peninsula was carried with a missionary zeal through the Jaffna Medical Association. The esteem in which he was held by his peers resulted in his election to the Presidency of the association and he remained one of its pillars until his death. He also continued to edit the Jaffna Medical Journal for several years, maintaining during his stewardship a Journal of international calibre.

Krishna was also a prolific writer in his own right on medical topics. His publications reflected a practical and pragmatic approach to the delivery of health care. A number of patient leaflets and booklets in Tamil bear testimony to his avid interest in informing and educating the lay public. He was particularly concerned with the plight of cancer patients and the lack of adequate facilities for the care of the terminally ill in the peninsula. The establishment of a Cancer Unit at Tellipallai Hospital was the hallmark of his tireless and single handed effort.

Dr. Krishnarajah is no more but he will be fondly remembered by all those who were fortunate enough to have encountered and benefited from his counsel and friendship. By his selfless service, he personified the divine nature of the human spirit.

N. Sree Haran.

Shanti: A Bitter Search for Peace

The Mahaabhaaratha, reputedly the longest story in verse, has been variously interpreted on stage and screen. It has also been the source of inspiration for great pieces of music and dance, and its impact has been felt strongly even outside the Indian sub-continent.

Thamils resident in the UK have seen the TV version of Mahaabhaaratha telecast by the BBC a few years ago. Produced on behalf of Dhoordharshan in India in Hindi and dubbed into English for the BBC, it had a strong cinema flavour which was artistically damaging. A far more intelligent interpretation of the epic was by Peter Brooke in 1988, and the shorter TV version of this open-air stage experience was telecast towards the end of 1989 by the BBC. Peter Brooke transformed a story which concerned a conflict between cousins over the right to a kingdom into a story of mankind. Somehow, this version remains far less known among the Thamils here. (I understand that Peter Brooke's production was rejected for telecasting by the Indian TV authorities for reasons which were not artistically or intellectually sound).

The most recent interpretation of the epic had its premiere at the Purcell Room of the South Bank Centre, London on 2.5.94. Akshaya Dance Theatre (formerly Pushkala Gopal Unnikrishnan and Co.,) presented the story through the eyes of Dhraupadhy, who in my view is the central character in the Mahaabhaaratha. The interpretation is faithful to the source and emphasises the agony of Dhraupadhy and explores possible alternatives to the war, which in the eyes of Krishna was altogether inevitable.

The opening scene brings Dhraupadhy to the battlefield in a chariot built by Krishna who conjures up images of war. The battle itself was beautifully portrayed in dance with great style and absolute dignity by Unnikrishnan and Prameela. Dhraupadhy mourns the death of her five sons and suffers a feeling of guilt for all the death and destruction that the war had caused. Krishna takes her through a journey in time to help her come to terms with reality and shows her that this war between good and evil was in fact inevitable.

Very few words were spoken on stage except for a few utterances designed to help the audience through critical junctures, a moving piece of poetry in Thamil, expressing the agony of Dhraupadhy and sung beautifully by Pushkala Gopal playing that role, and a highly rhythmic piece of prose in Thamil again by Pushkala expressing the anger of Dhraupadhy following her humiliation in the court of the blind king.

The music was charming as was the dancing. Unnikrishnan's highly expressive Kathakali style transformed him from Krishna into Karna, into each of the Pandava princes, into the evil brothers Dhuryodhana and Dushasana and back into Krishna to demonstrate the might of Indian dancing which performs this magic with a few hand movements, steps and facial expression. The Bharatha Naatya style of the two female dancers, Pushkala and Prameela, was pleasing and blended beautifully with everything else on stage where not one little movement or sound was without meaning or substance.

The Thillaanaa duet in Valaji to which Unnikrishnan and Pushkala danced formed the finalé and was a bonus on top of a performance which was dance and theatre rolled into one.

I sincerely hope that there will be several more performances of this brilliant dance drama which used the minimum of props on a simple and elegant stage with clever use of lighting and sound effects.

S. Sivasegaram.

W.L.T.S. Celebrates Thiagarajah Festival

Sri Thiagarajah Festival was celebrated for the 5th year in succession by the West London Tamil School on 27th February '94 at Kingsbury High School Hall, Kingsbury, London NW9. A large number of musicians and art lovers participated in this function.

Picture shows Karaikudy Krishnamoorthy, M. Yogeswary, Ambika Thamotheram, Lakshmi Jayan, K. Janaayagam, Somasundara Desigar and others at the Pancharatna Aarathanai.

Ontario Senior Tamils' Centre, Canada

The Ontario Senior Tamils' Centre had their Annual General Meeting, which was well attended. A complimentary sumptuous dinner followed. The following were elected office-bearers.

President: *S. Tharmalingam,* **Vice President:** *Dr. Pushpa Seevaratnam,* **Secretary:** *M. Velautha Pillai,* **Treasurer:** *V. Eeswaranathan,* **Board Members:** *Aloy Ratnasingham (Ex-Officio), Rosaline Rajanayagam, Siva Sivaramalingam, T. Sivarajah, C. Kanagalingam, T. Manickavasagar and T. Nadarajah.*

Kokuvil Old Students Cultural Show

Kokuvil Hindu College Old Students Association presented a well attended cultural show on 23rd April at the Mill Hill County High School Hall. The Chief Guest was one of their old boys, Mr. Wimal Sockanathan, a lawyer and broadcaster.

The programme began with a Violin Recital by Sivasankar with his student Joanna. Ananda Nadesan accompanied on the Tabla. It was a brilliant start for the evening's proceedings. The next item was a vocal recital by the well known carnatic musician Smt Saraswathy Packiyarajah, who hails from Kokuvil, taught in the college for 20 years and is now a patron of the association. She kept her audience mesmerised by her rendition and choice of songs.

Miss Delaney Murugiah presented three items of Bharatha Natyam and this was followed by a speech of welcome by Mr. K. Kanthapillai, the Chairman of the Association. The Chief Guest speaking next described the generation gap and the cultural gap and emphasised the increased responsibilities of parents and schools in bringing up children in the present environment.

Veteran Director Balendra and Actor Krishnarajah of The Tamil Performing Arts Society stole the show in their presentation of a social satire 'Mannikkavum' questioning today's eroded social values. Anandarani and Manoharan blended well with their characterisation of the 'upper class' couple. The secretary of the O.S.A. Mr. Ranjitkumar proposed the vote of thanks which was followed by 'Light Music' by the Sadhana Music Group. The O.S.A. produced a brochure on this occasion. It contained among others, articles by the Principal Emeritus Mr. C.K. Kanthaswami from Australia and Justice K. Palakidnar, an old boy of the college and who had retired recently from the Sri Lankan Judiciary as President of the Court of Appeal.

Tamil Association of Brent

The Tamil Association of Brent celebrated its 15th annual get together and the Tamil New Year on 16th April 1994 at the Brent Town Hall, where the audience exceeded over 900. Cllr. Bob Blackman, the leader of the London Borough of Brent, was the Chief Guest. The programme commenced with Bharatha Natyam Recitals by nine year old Pamela Vijayakumar and Anusha Gurunathan which were highly appreciated by the audience.

Brent Tamil School presented two enjoyable Tamil dramas, followed by a flute recital.

Fun With Numbers

The division sum 6753 × 738/7379

gives a quotient 675 and the remainder is 675 + (738 × 3) = 2889.

This method is applicable for the general sum (10a+b)c/(10c−1) where b is a single digit number.

The quotient is **a** *and the remainder is* **a** *+(* **b**×**c**).

Another Tamil Radio for Great Britain

Spectrum International Radio which has been broadcasting for the past few years, 24 hours a day in Hindi, Chinese, Spanish, Jewish and other languages in its **558 MW (AM)** metre band to listeners in Great Britain will have a **Tamil Programme** broadcast weekly on **Wednesdays at 8pm,** commencing Wednesday, 8th June 1994.

Well known and experienced Tamil broadcasters are expected to present the programme, which will consist of news and views of Tamils in Great Britain, current affairs, interviews, popular film songs – listeners' requests. This magazine programme is titled 'Vaanavil', which means a spectrum of colours.

Appeal for Assistance, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Cancer Patients in North/East Sri Lanka.

We are an association formed with the object of providing financial, medical and other assistance to cancer patients in North/East Sri Lanka.

As you are aware Tamils in North and East of Sri Lanka are undergoing untold hardship due to the ongoing civil war and inhuman military operations. There is dearth of food, medicine and medical faciLities due to blockade imposed in Tamil areas.

Though there is in general a need for support to all residents and patients, this need is felt more urgently in the case of cancer patients.

At a recent meeting in London with Dr. S. Sivakumaran, Senior Consultant of Jaffna General Hospital, we were informed that the hospitals in Jaffna/Batticaloa have no facilities to treat cancer patients and they are referred to Maharagama Hospital, Colombo.

Patients referred to Colombo are faced with the problems of transport, accommodation and medication.

As a first step we have sent £500 to Jaffna General Hospital to assist, financially, patients seeking treatment in Colombo.

In addition to financial assistance we propose to set up a hostel in Colombo to accommodate these patients. It is estimated that an initial outlay of £3,000 and a monthly payment of £300 will be required to rent and run a hostel for approximately 15 patients.

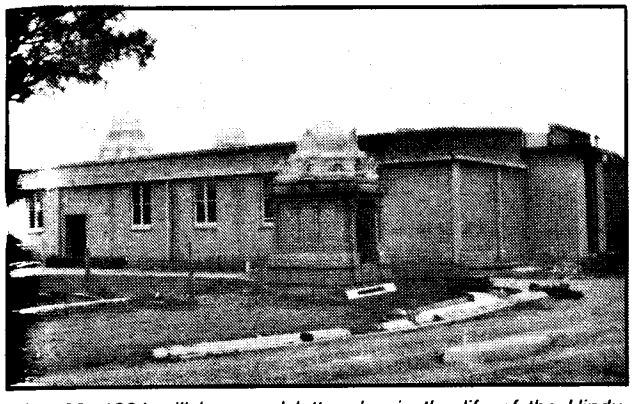
We appeal to you to contribute generously to this worthy cause, to alleviate the hardship of these desperate and deserving patients. All donations and contributions will be acknowledged.

Please Contact:-

Dr. J. Namasivayam
Chairman
Tel: 081-505 4725

or **Mr. N. Ariaratnam**
Secretary
Tel: 081-572 2112

A Shiva-Vishnu Temple in Melbourne



May 22, 1994 will be a red letter day in the life of the Hindu community of Victoria, Australia. On this day at the auspicious time between 8.30am to 11.30am, to the accompaniment of chanting of mantras, blowing of conchs and beating of drums the Maha Kumbhabhishekam (Consecration) ceremony of the Shiva-Vishnu Temple at Carrum Downs, Melbourne in the State of Victoria, will be performed.

Elaborate plans are under way to ensure that the Maha Kumbhabhishekam is performed in strict compliance of the holy scriptures and in conformity with the time honoured customs and traditions. Priests of high distinction from India, Sri Lanka together with Hindu scholars are expected to participate in the ceremonies and rituals associated with the Maha Kumbhabhishekam. Statesmen, politicians, community and religious leaders, and Government officials from all over Australia are expected to attend the function. The organisers anticipate thousands of Hindus from Australia and overseas will witness this momentous event. Arrangements are being made to provide lunch (annathanam) to devotees.

The Hindu Society of Victoria (H.S.V.) is the prime architect of the Shri Shiva-Vishnu temple. Formed in 1982, the Society from the outset determined that its first and foremost objective is the building of a traditional Hindu temple in an appropriate surrounding and with ease of accessibility to metropolitan Melburnians. The Temple site at Carrum Downs is in many ways one of the best spots and more importantly it meets the criteria set out in the scriptures for a temple siting namely virgin soil, closeness to sea and river confluence. The Carrum Downs temple is situated not far from the picturesque beaches of Carrum, Port Philip Bay and the several lakes around the Patterson river.

H.S.V. bought the land at Carrum Downs in extent 14.35 acres in 1985 borrowing much of the funds required from a bank, (the loan was repaid within six months). Once the land was purchased the momentum to build the temple was unstoppable. The society propelled by its own vision and encouraged by a few Hindu savants developed a game-plan. Firstly it launched a membership drive. From a membership of about 50 families at the time of inception, today the Society has a membership in excess of 300 families. The second and unquestionably the more difficult task was to collect funds. Initial estimates for the constructions were $750,000, a staggering amount by any standards. To date the Society has spent more than a million dollars, all collected from the Hindu community, benefactors and the Australian public.

The success of the Society is attributed to its ability to galvanise the energies of the young and the old and present itself as an association at grassroots level. A distinguishing feature of the building of the Temple has been the amount of voluntary work that has gone into it.

The foundation for the construction of the building was laid in 1990. It has taken the Society under 4 years to complete the building and open it for worship. The temple has been built combining contemporary Australian engineering with ancient Hindu architecture, an architecture which can be traced to 5th century C.E. The intricate sculptural and decorative works have been executed by specialist sculptors from India who have lived in the temple site for the past several months. The principal deities are Shiva and Vishnu. Thirty two other deities will also be housed. The temple is undoubtedly the biggest Hindu temple in the region.

The H.S.V. management does not think that the building of the temple is an end in itself nor does it conclude that the Shiva-Vishnu temple is merely a place of worship for Hindus. The H.S.V. firmly believes that the rich Hindu philosophy which the temple symbolises and the local Hindu community will make a strong contribution to the promotion of multiculturalism a concept which is earning for Australia an international respect and recognition. With this in view, H.S.V. will develop the Shri Shiva-Vishnu temple as a focal point for religious congregations and as a centre for research in spiritual studies.

In the next phase of development, a conference hall, a school, a retirement village, a sports facility centre, a library and a children's play area are planned to be added. Obviously fund raising is going to be crucial for the success of the grand plans of the Society. The Society appeals to Hindus, wherever they are, to donate generously and support the Hindu Society of Victoria.

Contributions to the Hindu Society of Victoria may be sent c/o Dr. A. Ponnambalam, 2 Dayan Drive, Wantirna, Victoria 3152, Australia, or H.S.V. Inc., PO.BOX 1016, Carrum Downs, Victoria 3201, Australia.

Kundrakudy Kuravanji – Dance Drama

The London Tamil Kalakam staged the Dance Drama, Kundrakudy Kuravanji at the Brent Town Hall, Wembley filled to capacity by an audience which was elated by the quality of the performance on Saturday, 9th of April 94. It was presented by Smt Uma Chandradeva, whose arduous training given to her students, the participants, with the joint collaboration from Smt Sutharsini Ramachandran had certainly paid off. Nearly thirty students appeared on stage and captured the hearts of the audience by their display of the variety of movements effortlessly executed to illustrate one of the most popular epics of our time. A creditable team work was displayed by all the dancers.

The first half of the programme were Flute, Violin, Vocal and Veena recitals along with eloquent speeches amidst others by the winners of The Inter School Speech Contest. Smt Saraswathy Packiayarajah, who directed the musical team sang superbly and ably contributed towards the success of the evening.

Jaffna Schools in Top Berth in A Level Results

Jaffna Schools have, in spite of the difficult conditions under which they have been working, secured the top berth in the Islandwide G.C.E. (A Level) examination held in 1992, the results of which, were issued recently.

The School Performance Indices measured objectively and presented by the Sri Lankan Department of Examinations, were developed on the basis of ability of pupils by calculating the average of all raw marks obtained by all the schol candidates for each subject, giving the Subject Performance Index of the school.

The process was repeated for all subjects and the total divided by the number of subjects, to give the Composite School Performance Index of each school.

The following is a statement of Indices of the Sri Lankan Schools in order of merit going down to 56.

Jaffna Hindu College; Devi Balika, Colombo 66; Royal College, Colombo 66; Hartley College, Pt. Pedro 65; St. Johns College, Jaffna 65; Visaka Vidyalaya, Colombo 62; Ladies College, Colombo 61; Ananda College, Colombo 60; Ashraq M.V., Nintavur 60; Methodist College Colombo 59; Vada Hindu Girls' College, Pt. Pedro 58; Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya 58; Moratuwa Convent 58; Museus Balika 58; Sirimavo Bandaranayake 58; St. Peters College 58; Wesley College 58; St. Patricks College, Jaffna 58; Dharmaraja M.V., Kandy 57; St. Joseph's College, Colombo 57; Dharmasoka M.V. Ambalangoda 57; St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo 57; Chundikuli Girls School, Jaffna 57; Vembadi Girls' High School, Jaffna 57; Girls' High School, Kandy 57; Maliyadeva Balika M.V., Kurunegala, 57; Rahula M.V., Matara 56; D.S. Senanayake, Colombo 56; Nalanda M.V., Colombo 56; St. Sebastian's Moratuwa 56; De Mazenod M.V., Kandana 56; Chavakacheri Hindu College 56; Mahajana College Tellippalai 56; Zahira Muslim, Mawanella 56; and Holy Family Convent Vidyalaya, Kurunegala 56.

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COLOMBO-DIRECT					
Rtn not valid 20Aug-5Sep	11 Apr-26 Jun	£297	£182	£450	£274
Rtn not valid 20Aug-5Sep	27Jun-10Jul & 16Aug-30Nov	£297	£182	£485	£295
Tktd before 31Mar	11Jul-14Jul			£530	£322
	11Jul-15Aug	£363	£222	£630	£382
Tktd before 31Mar	15Jul-15Aug			£580	£352
FAMILY FARE – Out Tue Sat Sun – Head	11Apr-30Jun & 1Sep-30Nov			£485	
Spouse				£438	
1st Child					£248
2nd Child					£200
FAMILY FARE – Out Thu – Head	11Apr-26Jun			£450	
Spouse				£406	
1st Child					£230
2nd Child					£186
COLOMBO VIA DUBAI K Class only	2Apr-14Jun			£448	£306
		£340	£236	£485	£306
	15Jun-14Jul	£350	£228	£580	£392
	15Jul-14Sep	£360	£234	£645	£435
	15Sep-30Sep	£340	£221	£515	£348
COLOMBO VIA KUWAIT	Until 30 Jun	£245	£169	£385	£263
SINGAPORE VIA COLOMBO	2Apr-14Jun			£510	£347
	15Jun-14Jul			£550	£368
	15Jul-14Sep			£660	£445
	15Sep-30Sep			£530	£358
COLOMBO MALE & SINGAPORE	08Jan-30Jun & 15Sep-30Nov	£395	£276	£685	£475
	01Jul-14Sep	£440	£306	£740	£512
MADRAS/TRICHY/TRIVENDRUM					
No stp Colombo	Until 10 Apr	£308	£189	£410	£250
Colombo stp alld				£500	£304
No stp Colombo, rtn not valid 20Aug-5Sep	27Jun-10Jul tktd by 15Apr			£460	£280
Colombo stp alld-rtn not valid 20Aug-5Sep	27Jun-10Jul & 16Aug-30Nov	£308	£189	£500	£304
No stp Colombo	11Jul-14Jul tktd by 15Apr			£560	£340
	11Jul-15Aug	£374	£229	£645	£391
SYDNEY VIA COLOMBO & SINGAPORE	01Jul-30Nov	£490	£337	£975	£668
	01Dec-07Jan	£575	£394	£975	£668
SYDNEY OR MELBOURNE VIA COLOMBO	Until 30Jun & 15 Sep-30Sep	£455	£313	£905	£621
SINGAPORE AND KUALA LUMPUR	01Jul-14 Sep	£495	£340	£925	£635

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

COMPETITIVE FARES TO OTHER DESTINATIONS AVAILABLE

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ROYAL JORDANIAN £ 380
Please contact for other destinations

Low Unaccompanied Baggage rates to COLOMBO:
Sea Freight ---- £ 9.00 per Tea Chest
---- £ 2.00 per cu. ft.
Air Freight ---- £ 30.00 per 10 Kg.
(£ 1.50 for additional Kg.)

MADRAS ---- £ 1.50 per Kg.
TRIVENDRUM ---- £ 1.80 per Kg.

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